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The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Society of American Fight Directors

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An Interview With Actor Michael York Part II

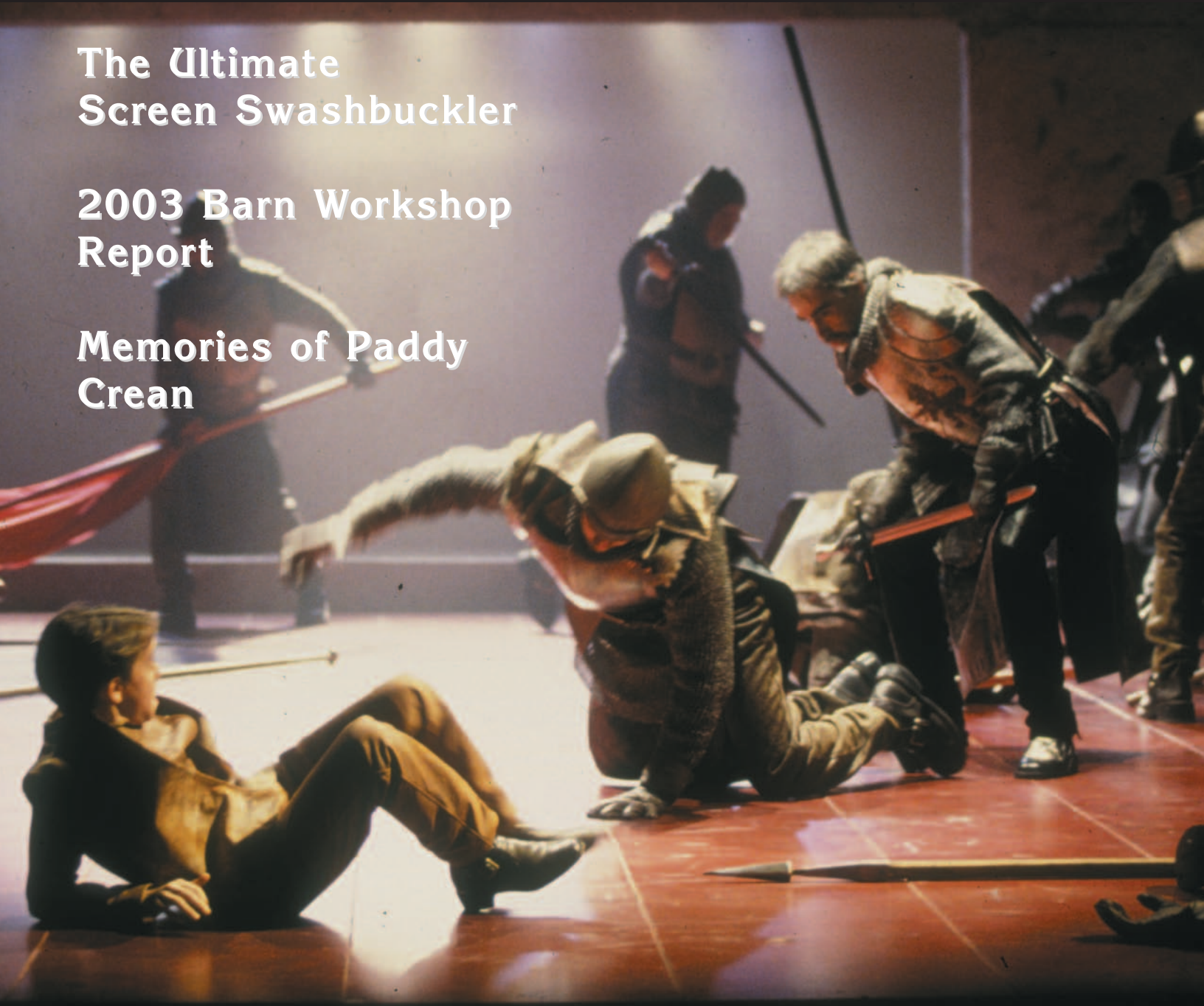
The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

The Ultimate
Screen Swashbuckler

2003 Barn Workshop
Report

Memories of Paddy
Crean



STAGE COMBAT: EXTREME ACTING



Hamlet (Ashley Wood, right) runs through *Claudius* (Jim Crawford) at the 2001 Ft. Worth Shakespeare in the Park. Directed and Choreographed by Nicholas Sandys. Photo by Mark Oristano.

The Society of American Fight Directors 25th Annual *National Stage Combat Workshops* July 12-30, 2004

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

Now that Jeffrey Forgeng's translation of the *Royal Armouries MS I 33* has been published in **The Medieval Art of Swordsmanship**, new information concerning the earliest known fencing treatise is being disseminated. The whole use of the buckler is totally different from what has come down from other fencing treatises or what is seen today on the stage. The fact that the illustrations include a female combatant is another puzzling surprise as scholars continue to interpret this manuscript which dates from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.

On another historical note, Paul Wagner takes a look at how the quarterstaff was handled in the old fencing treatises and how the illustrations sometimes can be misleading. One needs to pay attention to the technique being used and how it really works.

This issue of *The Fight Master* is almost a contradiction unto itself. Along with regular scholarly debates such as the scholarly pundit Robert Dillon who is frustrated at faux word usage and careless research to the extreme other side of the complex editorial stunt equation with the stimulating interview with Michael York, which provides insights into the actor's passage through some tricky stunt filming.

The Fight Master is first a scholarly journal. It is certainly hoped that readers are not offended by either article. When the smoke clears, *The Fight Master* is a unique forum for absorbing the learning, research and practice of the stage-fight arena.

With the passing of Paddy Crean last December, so many memories at workshops where he was in attendance or opportunities to study with him have come flooding back to many readers. For others, Crean is just a name and they never had the opportunity to know the man. It is important to preserve Crean's contributions to the world of staged combat. The editors are looking for articles to share with future readers which preserve his choreography and his approach to staging a fight. The deadline for the 2004 Fall/Winter issue is June 1 and November 1 for the 2005 Spring/Summer issue.

Feinting the Pen Briskly,

Linda Carlyle McCollum

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J. Allen Suddeth, past President and Fight Master of the Society of American Fight Directors, is the author of *Fight Directing for the Theatre*. A fight director on Broadway, in regional theatres and on daytime television drama, he teaches at the Lee Strasberg Institute and NYU and has run the Fight Director's Workshop at the Celebration Barn for a number of years.

Paul Wagner is a founding member of the Stoccata School of Defence (<http://www.stoccata.org>) and teaches classes and courses on Silver's single sword and sword-and-buckler, English quarterstaff, English backsword, English longsword, the rapier of Joseph Swetnam, sword and buckler according to *I.33* and sword and large shield reconstructed from Talhoffer.

Derek Ware is a fencing coach and actor with over two-hundred-fifty theatre, film and television credits. He is also a former member of the British Academy of Dramatic Combat and founder of The Institute of Staged Combat in England.

Articles and letters for *The Fight Master* are accepted at anytime. Articles intended for inclusion in the Spring/Summer issue must be received by November 1. Articles intended for inclusion in the Fall Winter issue must be received by June 1.

Submissions to *The Fight Master*

should be sent to:

UNLV Dept. of Theatre
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Las Vegas, NV 89154-5044

Fax (702) 895-0833

mccollum@ccmail.nevada.edu

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and length. Articles should be typed, and include a short biography, 50 words or less, about the author. Please include the address, phone/fax and e-mail address in the correspondence.

GRAPHICALLY SPEAKING

The Fight Master is currently seeking active photos of stage combat for upcoming issues. Black & white and color prints (no smaller than 4" x 6") and slides will be accepted. All photos should include the performers' names and roles if fewer than five are pictured, photographer, play, playwright, fight director, theatre company and year of performance. Photos should also include return address. Without this information, pictures cannot be used. 8" x 10" prints or color slides with strong vertical orientations are also desired for covers; these should be shot as close up as possible (full bodies need not be visible).

Digital camera photographs must meet the following additional criteria:

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- ◆ 300 dpi (dots per inch)
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The deadline for graphic material for the Fall/Winter issue is July 31, for the Spring/Summer issue is January 31. Future submissions are accepted at any time. Send all prints sandwiched between two pieces of cardboard in an envelope clearly labeled "Photos - Do Not Bend" to:

John Tovar
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If there are any questions, please feel free to call (630) 330-4293 or e-mail JTovarSAFD@aol.com. Again, exciting photos are encouraged from all levels of the SAFD membership.

John Tovar

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As of the Fall/Winter 2001 issue, *The Fight Master* will advertise non-SAFD workshops and services, including:

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Workshops that have officially been sanctioned as SAFD workshops as detailed in the Policies & Procedures are entitled to a free 1/4 page ad in *The Fight Master*. Larger ads may be purchased at a discounted rate. Non-SAFD workshop ads may be purchased at full price. Ads can be designed by a graphic designer for a slight fee. For more information please contact:

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Notification for advertising in the Spring/Summer issue must be received by December 1; artwork due by January 15. Notification for the Fall/Winter issue must be received by July 1; artwork due by August 15. Please call for rates or other information.



On the Front Cover:

A battle scene from the 1999 production of King John at The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C.. Directed by Michael Kahn. Fight Choreography by David Leong. Photograph by Carol Rosegg. Used under authorization.



On the Back Cover:

When Friendship battles Love, no one wins. Libby Beyreis (Left) and Elizabeth Styles (Right) square off in a scene from Babes with Blades: The Music Videos. Scene directed by Elizabeth Styles and Libby Beyreis. Photograph courtesy of Johnny Knight. Used under authorization.

The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

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For stage combat assistance, workshop information, and general questions.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings,

The SAFD has added a new ship to its fleet of National Workshops. The **Summer Session: Introduction to Stage Combat** (SSISC) workshop is being produced in partnership with North Carolina School of the Arts. The new SSISC is a different from other SAFD workshops.

The SSISC is designed to be an overview class covering the basics of all eight SAFD recognized weapon styles. It is geared for those interested in a basic grounding in stage combat, but who are either not performers or simply do not want the pressure of performing a Skills Proficiency Test. The SSISC is open to adults and high school students fifteen years of age and older. Based on application materials, students will be placed into appropriate class groupings that will offer their best potential of growth and development. SSISC students also have the option of taking the workshop for either high school or college credit if they so desire, with credit issued through the North Carolina School of the Arts. It is hoped that high school teachers, as well as stage managers, directors, and others who want or need some stage combat knowledge will attend the SSISC. More information is available at: www.safd.org, www.ncarts.edu, or in the last edition of the *Cutting Edge*.

The Union Negotiation Committee has made significant progress since last reported. The SAFD has received a favorable ruling from the National Labor Relations Board regarding the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) / Lyric Opera of Chicago talks. The right of Fight Directors to participate as a part of a collective

bargaining unit has been recognized. While talks continue over the particulars, the SAFD is confident that it will have a signed contract by year's end. Updates in future issues of the *Cutting Edge* and *Fight Master* will be forthcoming.

Finally, the stage combat community lost one of its guiding lights with the passing of Patrick "Paddy" Crean in December. Paddy was teacher, friend, mentor, and advisor to many in the Stage Combat world. He will be greatly missed.

As always

Fight the good fight!



photo highlights from Jamie Cheatham's thesis project, *Violent Delights*, featuring MFA candidates: Robin Armstrong, Jerry Tan, Tiza Garland, Jim Quesenbury & Jamie Cheatham

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Handedness in Staff Weapons

By Paul Wagner

Reprinted from *SPADA*

ntroduction

As Sydney Anglo, the author of *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, has pointed out, poleaxe and quarterstaff combat have a great deal in common (Anglo, 113-118). George Silver agreed, noting in his section on quarterstaff;

The like fight is to be used wt ye javelen, prtyson, halbard, black byll, battle Axe, gleve, half pyke, &c (Silver, Cap 12).

and Giacomo Di Grassi reasoned that;

Of the weapons of the Staffe, namely, the Bill, the Partisan, the Holbert, and the Javelin...I am of opinion, that all of them may be handled in manner after one waye (Cap 14).

However, the terminology within the manuals dealing with these weapons is not consistent, and the techniques often rest upon conventions which even the Masters disagree on. It is important to understand these differences, as proceeding on a false assumption can lead to radical misinterpretations of the material.

Holding Staff Weapons

Even the most basic question of how the weapon is held receives different answers from different sources. The further back the staff is held the more range, but the further up the shaft the more control one has. Di Grassi said the staff can be held in whatever way "shall be thought most commodious to the bearer"—some "who greatly regarding ease & little paine" hold it forward for balance, while others, "more strong of arme, but weaker of hart" hold it further back (Di Grassi, Cap 14, Pt 8). For quarterstaff, Joseph Swetnam preferred the later grip, with the rear hand at the very butt.¹ Silver, however, is clear that the front hand should be on the center of balance, and gives a practical reason for it, in the overhand "thrust-single" with the butt.²

One thing Silver does not indicate which hand must be forward, sensibly describing his technique in terms such as "lie you with your point down also, with your foremost hand low and your hind most hand high" (Silver, Cap 11, Pt 6), or, when necessary to specify, describing the difference between a left and right hand grip.³

The need for Silver to specify this highlights the major problem of deciding which hand should be forward. All the masters assume one must be able to fight from both, as engagement or crossing of shafts is of the utmost importance to a secure fight. Swetnam said;

always standing crosse with your enemie, I meanie, if his right hand and foote be foremost, let yours be so likewise, and if his left-hand an foote be foremost, then make you your change and crosse with him also...Now, if your enemie doth assault you upon the contraie side, you must change both your foote and hand to crosse with him, as before (Swetnam, 134).

European polearm sources such as Camillo Agrippa, Fiore dei Liberi, Paulus Hector Mair, Joachim Meyer, Jakob Sutor, Hans Talhoffer and Filippo Vadi, all show matched, engaged stances,⁴ and Di Grassi also instructed;

regarding alwaies to place himself with the contrarie foote before to that which the enemie shall set forth, that is to say: Yf the enemie be before wth the left foote, then to stand with his right foote, or contrarie wise (Di Grassi, Cap 14, Pt 3).

The reason for doing so is explained by Swetnam;

It is necessary, that hee which useth the Staffe, should have use of both his hands alike, for thereby he may the better shift his staffe from hand to hand, whereby to lie crosse alwaies with your enemie, changing your hand and foote, as hee changeth for lying the one with right hand and foote for-most, and the other with the left, then he that striketh first, can not choose but endanger the others hand (Swetnam, 136).

Inside & Outside

This choice is not a simple question of left- or right-handedness. A review of the Masters and historical artwork confirms the modern experience that some people simply prefer their dominant hand forward, some back. This is most clearly shown in the confusion between Zachary Wylde's

and Swetnam's definitions of the *inside* and *outside* lines.

For all practitioners, the *Low Ward* was the primary ward for weapons of the staff, with the rear hand low by the rear hip, the front arm extended, and the point of the weapon sloping upwards across the body, pointing at the enemy. Swetnam called this "the trueguard for the Staffe," (Swetnam, 134) and Di Grassi said "there shall be framed (by my counsell) no more than one ward," (Di Grassi, Cap 14, Pt 3) which was this one. For Swetnam, the Low Ward defined the staff fight- *outside* is the side of one's rear hand when he is in Low Ward and the *inside* is the other. If one's Low Ward is held correctly it secures the entire Outside line:

...alwaies have a care to keepe your stafe in his right place, that is to say, if your right hand and foote be foremost, then leave all your bodie open, so that your enemy can not endanger you on the out-side of your staffe, but if he will hit you, he must needed strike or thrust in the inside of your stafe (Swetnam, 136).

or

if he proffer a thrust on the out-side of your Staffe: you neede not to feare nor offer to defend it, for there is no place in anie danger, but all is guarded (Swetnam, 137).

This makes intrinsic sense—if, for example, the right hand and the right foot are forward, the staff sits defending all blows to the left-hand side, and logic would dictate that this is the *outside*. If the front hand is taken away, the lines match the engagement of single sword or rapier in an *outside* guard, in this case a left-handed one. Wylde, however says;

...come to an inside Guard; the Butt end of your Staff then will be against your left Side, both your Arms being stiffly extended, the other Part of your Staff will cross your Opposer's Eyes: Lying on this manner, if your Opposer makes a Blow or Stroke to your left Ear or inside, you are then prepared with a true Guard (Wylde, 32).

This is, of course the same ward as Swetnam's, but is defined as the exact opposite. Whereas Swetnam would seem to assume the dominant hand is likely to be at the rear, Wylde's assumption is that the dominant hand is forward. If the right hand and right foot are forward, the staff sits defending all blows to the left-hand side. If the rear hand is

taken away, the line of the staff from the front hand then matches Wylde's inside or *Carte* guard of backsword and smallsword (Wylde, 12). Even with some of this twisted logic, the consequence is that the "natural" guard of the staff leaves the outside completely open.

Interestingly, a little of this confusion is even found in Swetnam. One of his two quarterstaff illustrations is of two figures facing each other in Low Ward. According to the text, they should be engaged, "standing crosse with your enemy." Instead the picture shows the staffs both inside each other's line. Apart from the Escher-like perspective of this impossible situation, nothing prevents either party from immediately striking the other. If redrawn with the right-hand staff in front of the left, the illustration would then match both the written text and the laws of physics. Swetnam himself makes a caveat about the illustrations, saying "...according to this Picture, yet regard chiefly the words rather than the Picture" (Swetnam, 86). It would seem even the artist got confused as to which was the outside."

The attempt by the English Masters to define the staff fight in terms of *inside* or *outside* lines was necessary because the need to be able to fight with either hand forward plays havoc with normal fencing terminology. A *mandritta*, for example, is by definition a blow delivered from the right side to the opponent's left side. If one holds the staff right-hand-forward, this remains a valid definition. However, on the whole, English quarterstaff tended to be held with the controlling hand at the rear—R. G. Allanson-Winn wrote "...the butt of the staff, i.e. that end which is nearest the right hand of a right-handed man..." (7), the convention also shown by both Thomas MacCarthy and the Boy Scouts. The natural blow here would technically be a *roverso*, as it travels from one's left and is aimed at the opponent's right side. This, of course, makes no practical sense. The only way of making the terminology hand-independent is to define it in terms of *outside* and *inside*—the natural blow could thus be described as an *outside squalebrato*, as it is delivered from one's outside line into the opponent's outside line.

Handedness in *La Jeu de la Hache*

Despite the legendary superiority of the English quarterstaff, the theoretical basis of all polearm combat is (unsurprisingly) fairly consistent across both Europe and Asia. Although the English developed a convention of left-hand-forward for staff weapons, in the European works, either with staff or the polearms of various sorts, no consistency exists as to which hand should naturally be forward. While the texts all recommend that the longswords be held with the right hand at the front, the pictures in Hans Lebkammer, Meyer, Sutor, Bonaventura Pistofilo and Agrippa show staff weapons held left-hand forward, while Vadi, Di Grassi, Talhoffer and dei Liberi are primarily right-hand forward. This lack of uniformity becomes a major problem when looking at unillustrated manuals such as *Le Jeu de la Hache*.

Le Jeu de la Hache is an anonymous fifteenth century Burgundian manual which deals specifically with armoured combat with a *poll-hammer* or *bec de faucon*.⁵ It describes most moves in terms of left and right, and is also one of the few manuals to provide instructions on what to do if one's opponent refuses to cross shafts, and insists on fighting left handed. The author obviously assumes that the right-handed knight will hold the axe in a certain way, either left-hand forward (i.e. left hand near the head of the axe) or right-hand forward. But which one? No overt instructions are presented in the text that allow one to distinguish which hand is forward. Different assumptions lead to different interpretations, and only careful consideration of the techniques themselves can provide an answer.

The first sequence in *Le Jeu de la Hache* reads;

When one would give you a swinging blow, right-hander to right-hander. If you have the *croix* in front, you can step forward with your left foot, receiving his blow, picking it up with the *queue* of your axe and - in a single movement- bear downward to make his axe fall to the ground. And from there, following up one foot after the other, you can give him a jab with the said *queue*, running it through the left hand, at the face: either there or wherever seems good to you. Or swing at his head (*Le Jeu de La Hache*, Point 4).

The first possibility is that the axe is held left-hand forward.⁶ Under this assumption, the sequence has been interpreted as follows (Lovett);

1) Agent: ⁷

Left foot forward. Axe ready to deliver a *Squalambrato mandritto*⁸ or *Tondo mandritto* towards the head (i.e. a right-handed swing to the opponent's left side).

2) Patient Agent:

Left foot back, right foot forward, 3/4 stance, axe held in a high guard with the axe head forward, threatening a thrust towards face of opponent.

3) Agent:

Swing the blow, either *Squalembtrato* or *Tondo*, making sure that one is aiming at the patient agent's head.

4) Patient Agent:

Step forward with left foot and ward with shaft with an inside guard. This will take the motion of swinging a blow in opposition to the agent's blow. When axe makes contact on the shaft, one pushes the agent's axe to ground and steps forward with the right foot as he does so. He recovers the axe and thrusts with the *queue* at the face as he continues stepping forward or swings the axe head at the agent as a *ridoppio reverso* aiming at the agent's head.

Some objections might be raised to this interpretation. First, the first attack described in the manuscript, "swinging blow, right-hander to right-hander," could reasonably be expected to be the most natural blow, i.e., an outside *squalamabrato*. If the axe is held left-hand forward, this would be a blow towards the opponent's right side, not his left. Second, the Patient Agent's stance of left-hand-forward but "left foot back, right foot forward, axe held...head forward, threatening a thrust towards the face" is awkward; it is necessary in order to fulfill the movement instructions of the manual, and while there are some precedents in longsword technique,⁹ such a crossed position is not shown in any other staff or poleaxe manual and, as the author pointed out;

This seems quite strange as you feel like you are striking in opposition to your movement, i.e. stepping forward with the left foot while striking from the right hand side (Lovett).

The sequence seems also quite complicated, with a number of steps not contained within the original instructions, and the act of "bearing downward to make his axe fall to the ground" actually brings the Agent's staff up into an almost perfect hanging guard, allowing the very real possibility of him escaping unharmed.

If, however, it is assumed both grip their axes right-hand-forward, the fight proceeds long quite different lines;

1) Agent:

Stance: Right hand and right foot forward, in Low Ward.

2) Patient Agent:

Stance: Right hand and right foot forward in Low Ward.

3) Agent:

Swings an Outside *Squalambrato*, the natural blow to patient agent's left shoulder.

4) Patient Agent:

Passes forward "with his left foot," crossing shafts and warding the blow in the *demi-hache*, then turns his shaft clockwise, turning the butt into the agent's face. This picks up or binds agent's shaft and leaves the butt directly in agent's face, ready to thrust.

ing shafts and warding the blow in the *demi-hache*, then turns his shaft clockwise and bears down on the agent's shaft to force it to the ground. The patient agent can then thrust the butt into the agent's face "running it through the left hand," or step back and deliver a *fendentae* at the agent's head.

On balance, this seems a much simpler interpretation, and exactly such a move is described in several quarterstaff sources. It also explains the instructions for the "jab with the said *queue*, running it through the left hand, at the face"—from the position described in (4), the agent can grab the patient agent's left forearm stopping a two-handed thrust, but if the patient agent runs the shaft "through the left hand" he still strikes the agent's face.

If this is correct, and *Le Jeu de la Hache* assumes a right-hand forward grip, as preferred by Talhoffer and de Liberi, many of its techniques would seem to become clearer and simpler.

However, a problem exists in this interpretation as it does not deal with the instructions to "bear downward to make his axe fall to the ground"—the opponent's shaft is simply deflected. Further comparison with other works offers one possibility. In Swetnam's section dealing with Welsh Hook, after describing how to "turn the butt" into the opponent's face, he provides a neat counter when:

You can otherwise counter it by following up his tugging, stepping forward as he pulls. And from there, stepping with your left foot to his right side, hit him violently with the *queue* of your axe on his neck, knocking him over (*Le Jeu de la Hache*, Point 32).

you may fall away turning the edge or your Bill or Hooke towards his legge, and so by a drawing blow rake him over the shins, and keeping up the But-end of the Staffe for the defence of your owne head, and so you may fall out of his distance, and recover your guard before he can any way endanger you (Swetnam, 22).

Any number of examples could be given, but as just one particularly clear sequence, here are the instructions dealing with what to do if axe heads become entangled; Standing right-foot and right-hand forward, with heads entangled, the technique is to pass forward-and-left with the left foot (which will unentangle the heads), and striking the back of the opponent's head with the butt, which is held in the left hand. Again, this is simple and instantly recog-

In other words, the sequence can be continued;

5) Agent:

As patient agent turns his butt, agent steps or traverses right with the rear foot, pulling the butt up to his head and drawing *croix* over patient agent's shins.

Dart your staff at his Face with your Left Hand, which he endeavours to stop, slide your Right Hand to your Left and at full length hit him on the left side of his Head, which is scarce to be Defended (McBane, 68).

If, however, one followed the instructions of *Le Jeu de la Hache* to the letter, Swetnam's clever counter is neutralized;¹⁰

nizable from similar moves in other works such as Donald McBane, who uses a feint to open up his opponent for a similar strike;

By comparison, standing left-hand forward, stepping to the left and hitting the opponent's neck with the butt would seem all but physically impossible.

4) Patient Agent:

Passes forward with the left foot, cross-

No agreement exists, even among the Masters, as to where the dominant hand should be held in two-handed

polearms. While it is recommended that practitioners must be able to fight from both stances, some sources use only one or the other for instruction purposes. Where this is not clearly stated or shown, such as in *Le Jeu de la Hache*, different assumptions of handedness can lead to dramatically different interpretations of the material, and only through analyzing the entire work may its internal assumptions be clarified. In the absence of any clear instructions from the Masters, it is therefore recommended that such assumptions not be made, and that all possibilities should be explored.

Footnotes

1 "Keep the point of your Staffe right in your enemies face, holding one hand at the verie butt end of the Staffe, and the other a foote and a halfe distance, looking over your Staffe with both your eies"(Swetnam, 134).

2 Silver, Cap Pt 9. See also Brown, Terry, *English Martial Arts*. 1997, p. 156. It should also be noted that all English, and the majority of European masters, gripped the shaft with one-palm up, one palm-down. Although a few German manuals illustrate both palms down (thumbs facing in) grip, the consequences of this are beyond the scope of this paper, and it is not considered relevant to the discussion of *Le jeu de la Hache* (see also note 6).

3 Silver, Cap 11, Pt 9 & 10.

"If you play with your staff with your left hand before and your right hand behind....The like must you do if you play with your right hand before, & your left hand behind, but if you need not to slide forth your left hand, because your right hand is in the right place on your staff already to use in that action."

4 A few isolated exceptions to this general rule exist. For example, Talhoffer's 1467 *Fechtbuch* contains in two illustrations of mismatched hands, specifically *tafel* 88 and 99. Even here, they are greatly outnumbered by matched stances.

5 Anglo, 113-119. The identification of the weapon in question as a poll-hammer is made on the basis that the manuscript refers to the head of the weapon as containing amongst other things, a hammer (*mail*), but at no point is mention made of a cutting edge or *taillant*.

6 The interpretations here also assume the "front hand" is holding the head of the weapon. While holding the head back with a cutting weapon (e.g. bill, axe) does have virtue in some circumstances, *Le Jeu de la Hache* is specifically about poll-hammers. In the manuscript, butt strikes (i.e. those done with the rear hand) are always thrusts, usually done by running it through the hand to spike the opponent in the face and blows are done *swinging*, with the head forward. Any blow delivered with the rear hand (thumbs in) grip would be much less powerful than with the front hand (thumbs out) grip. No evidence exists that a reversed-grip was intended in *Le Je de la Hache*.

7 The "agent," in English fencing convention, is the aggressor, while the "patient agent" is the defender.

8 *Mandritta*: a blow delivered from one's right side to the opponent's left side.

Roverso: a blow delivered from one's left side to the opponent's right side.

Squalemrato: a diagonally descending blow

Tondo: a horizontal blow

Fendente: a vertically descending blow

9 For example, see Talhoffer, Hans. *Fechtbuch aus dem Jahre 1467*, *tafel* 1 & 6.

10 Swetnam also provides a second counter to the bind, where the front hand is removed from the shaft, allowing the staff to flip around into a hanging ward. This move suffers even worse when it is "born downward" to the ground.

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An Interview With Actor Michael York

Part II

CELEBRATING THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE RELEASE OF RICHARD LESTER'S
THE THREE MUSKETEERS
AND
THE FOUR MUSKETEERS

by Michael Kirkland

EDITOR'S NOTE: The thirtieth anniversary of the release of Richard Lester's *The Three Musketeers* (1973), *The Four Musketeers* (1975) and the impact those films have had on a generation of fight directors was the impetus for Michael Kirkland's interview. Part II looks at *The Four Musketeers*

[The Three Musketeers is ending and there is a montage of shots that are intended to whet the appetite for the release of The Four Musketeers. The montage offers clips from several of the fights in the second film. The Three Musketeers is over. After a break, York brings several pages of plastic sleeves containing slides of still shots taken by his wife, professional photographer, Pat McCallum-York.]

MK: These are fantastic. They all look to be from the fights at the end of *The Four Musketeers*—outside the Convent. There's some excellent fights in the second film. I'm definitely looking forward to the fight on the ice—I have always wondered how you guys did that. It just looks dangerous as all hell.

[York inserts The Four Musketeers into his DVD player.]

MY: It was. It was—miserable.

MK: You mean filmmaking isn't glamorous?

MY: It was —hard.

MK:...So as you were reprising D'Artagnan here recently, did you find you fell back into the swordplay pretty easy?

MY:Yes, it did. It was, they wanted you know, our director, they loved the films—the same spirit in a way. It was, there was a lot of comedy and levity and lightheartedness—obviously it's not going to be the same.

MK: No. These two films, I think, are classics. I don't think there's another version that touches them.



[D'Artagnan is accompanying Constance to the market where she is buying groceries. They are set upon by D'Rocheport and some of his henchmen. After being drubbed from behind—D'Artagnan falls to the ground, only to have a cartload of potatoes dumped on his head.]

MK: *[Laughing]* There you go.

MY: Now that's for real. That's —no stunt guy— I remember I jumped into a trough of water that was freezing cold.

MK: Oh, yeah. That chase scene before D'Artagnan faces Richelieu for the first time.

MY: That was, we did it five times, really!

[A 17th century forerunner of the submarine is seen floating to the surface just off shore. A door opens revealing the Duke of Buckingham. His Master Mariner has just completed a demonstration of the new fangled undersea ship. He is not impressed. As he tells the man so, a group of servants wade out into shoulder deep water with a sedan chair intended for the Duke.]

MK: ...It's so funny to see these scenes, like when the King, Louis is falconing out in the field and they set up the tent with the banquet spread—and now here with the servants coming out with the sedan chair—in six feet in the water.

MY: I love this hunting scene. It's just—inventive.

MK: I would dearly love to get a hold of the screenplay, to see how much of that is scripted.

MY: Mine are all in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. I gave them all. They're along with the Chaucer and the Shakespeare—and my script. Just of a bit of fantasy myself.

[In The Four Musketeers, Athos is warning the young D'Artagnan to keep away from Milady de Winter. He tells him a story about a young nobleman who was dishonored when he discovered he had married a harlot. The story is seen in flashback and it is instantly known that the young nobleman was the Compt d'la

Fere, otherwise known as Athos. And the woman who ruined him? She is now known as Milady de Winter.]

MK: They really made Oliver Reed look so much younger there—he just looks so haunted.

[D'Artagnan has visited Milady de Winter, and while frolicking in the bedroom, he accidentally discovers her secret. She's been branded with the sign of the harlot, the fleur de lis on her shoulder. She cannot let him live. This leads to a fight in the bed-chamber between D'Artagnan and Milady de Winter. He attempts to avoid her acid filled glass daggers while maneuvering to get to his rapier—while holding a bed sheet around his waist. He barely escapes as one of her acid filled daggers crashes into the door behind him.]

MY: I'd got the flu and I still had it.

MK: That's gotta be fun, fighting when you're ill.

MY: Well, yeah, this is what you do. There were two fights actually. I was sort of under the weather.

[D'Artagnan, while attempting to escape Milady de Winter, leaps out of a window and drops into a passing sedan chair.]

MY: Oh—I remember the sedan chair—a lovely part...

[D'Artagnan is set upon by several of the Cardinal's guards. In attempting to escape he slides down a thick marble banister. As they attempt to grab him he kicks at them even while sliding to the bottom of the staircase. He then encounters two guards who place two crossed halberds in his path. He feints a duck. They lower their weapons and he promptly leaps over them.]

MK: And kicking as you go! That was a nice little accent.

[The chase then goes into the streets.]

MY: Yes! We were cloaked, too.

MK: That's the thing—the way you guys make it look so easy.

MY: I think this is Toledo.

[D'Artagnan, in an attempt to hide from his pursuers, grabs a long thin tube and jumps into a horse trough, using the tube to breathe through. Jussac, thinking he's lost his man, kicks out the stopper that holds the water in the trough. It soon drains dry, revealing a thoroughly soaked D'Artagnan. The partially submerged musketeer can only smile...ruefully. He soon finds himself, dripping wet, and in a private audience with Cardinal Richelieu.]

MK: And there you go into the horse trough (*laughing*).

MY: *[Closing eyes, a disgusted look on his face.]* Agh—ugh.

MK: You can still remember how cold it was?

MY: Ugh—filthy—we did—that was probably done five times at least.

MK: That's probably how you caught that flu.

MY: *[Agreeing]* Yeah, yeah—John McEnery, in *Romeo and Juliet* *[making reference to the 1968 Zeffirelli's film]*, he definitely got sick being in that fountain all day.

[D'Artagnan is now having an impromptu audience with the Cardinal.]

MY: Now this in a castle in Segovia.

MK: Segovia. So you were all over the place. Was Spain chosen because of its wealth of castles?

MY: I think so. And filming tradition.

MK: Where was the studio?

MY: It was outside of Madrid.

[Constance who had been kidnapped by Rochefort, is being held prisoner. An exterior establishing shot moves inside to her spare quarters. As she's being brought food, she knees her jailer in the groin and makes her way to a window only to see that a precipitous fall would leave her to face several snarling and ferocious dogs. She turns and plops, petulantly, on a small bench in front of the window. She's going nowhere.]

MK: This always looked like it might have been a set, the interior where Constance is being held.

MY: But it wasn't. No, I don't think it was.

[Aramis, Athos, and Porthos stage Constance's escape for Rochefort's guards.]

MK: Oliver Reed just always seemed to fight with such abandon.

MY: Yes, he did.

[Constance is guided to her window where she is met by Porthos...on stilts. She climbs on his shoulders and he attempts to navigate them across the yard to safety; all the while the dogs are attacking the legs of the stilts. But they are soon safely on their way.]

MK: You've frequently mentioned how you can see the changing of the seasons in the film. How long were you actually on location?

MY: Six months.

[D'Artagnan is on horseback crossing a bridge. His horse is tripped. Suddenly he is facing several assassins, of which at least one of them is armed with a short matchlock musket. As he takes aim at the helpless musketeer, who has retreated onto the ice of a small stream, Rochefort steps into view. He smacks the assassin as if to say, "How dare you shoot him down. He's mine." He then makes his way on to the ice for a face off with the much relieved D'Artagnan. Now, at least he has a chance.]

MK: Now we've got the fight on the ice.

MY: As you can see there's snow on the ground, but it's—you're not going to see our breaths.

MK: Do you remember what month this fight was shot in?

MY: August. July or August.

MK: *[Laughing]* July or August. Out in the snow. Brings to mind Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*—when Jimmy Stewart was running down Bedford Falls' Main Street. They shot that during a summer heat wave. So how did they handle the ice on the stream bed?

MY: It's actually paraffin: paraffin wax.

MK: So was it actually a dry riverbed?

MY: *[Nodding his head in agreement.]*

MK: *[Referring to a later point in the fight.]* So when you fall through the ice, into the supposedly freezing water beneath, what, they dug a pit or something?—and put water in there.

MY: Yes!

[Both swordsmen are slipping and sliding about uncontrollably. Attempting to thrust and parry, they go skittering across the ice—falling, rising, sliding, only to fall again.]

MK: Okay. It looks so slippery.

MY: It was.

MK: Now, that's Christopher Lee out there with you, right?

MY: Yes—

MK: Every time I watch this sequence, I wonder about—all the falling you had to do. *[D'Artagnan attacks with a particularly frenetic series of thrusts.]* Great commitment, in all those thrusts even though you can hardly stay on your feet. So that's all dry, and just covered with paraffin?

[The fight on the ice begins.]

MY: Paraffin, yes! Brilliant construction! So convincing!

[D'Artagnan slips, falls, his rear end punching through the ice and causing him to sink into the frigid water below the ice.]

MK: And there you go, into the water.

[Shortly thereafter, as Rochefort prepares to move in for the kill, the same thing happens to him.]

MK: It's like Hobbs said, "Okay, we've got to do everything but that, we've got to make it all look out of control, slipping, falling, off balance all the time."

MY: I think that's why they're so exciting. Don't you? It's all sort of wild, isn't it?

[The other three musketeers arrive on the scene just in time to keep the assassins from swooping in like vultures to finish off D'Artagnan. As Aramis mortally wounds one of the brigands, he kneels beside him and, solemnly crosses himself.]

MK: *[Amused]* And he's careful to administer last rites.

[Porthos attempts to move out on the ice and help D'Artagnan. He suddenly slips down an embankment and lands jarringly on his behind. Rochefort slips and slides along the streambed as he makes his escape.]

MY: So hard. This took three or four days to shoot.

[The musketeers now find themselves at the siege of La Rochelle. War makes strange bedfellows. They find themselves fighting, alongside Rochefort, the protestant rebels at La Rochelle. They even find themselves having to put their lives on the line to rescue the villain when he's captured—and about to be executed by an inept firing squad.]

MK: So here's the battlefield sequence at La Rochelle .

MY: Oh, yes. I forget where exactly we were.

MK: *[Referring to the acres of tents, cannon, and extras.]* That's quite an encampment. And I assume the carpenters built that parapet out there?

MY: Yes. It was an old ruin and they added to it.

[The musketeers need a private place to confer, but there is none to be had. Athos notices an abandoned structure, in the no-man's-land in between the King's forces and the walls, and well within shooting distance of the enemy. He bets a soldier that he and his friends will have breakfast in that precarious structure. And they do, indeed, win the bet. We watch the scene unfold...]

MK: This is a very fun scene.

MY: Yeah, this is all pretty fun.

[Porthos has a glass of wine shot out of his hand and dryly comments, "This wine does not travel well."]

MK: Those lovely little moments Finley drops in there.

MK: It was fun that they allowed you to do so much comedy in the piece as well instead of just being—

MY: —the typical straight guy.

[D'Artagnan attempts to golf a 17th century mortar out the window with a loaf of bread. It gets stuck on the bread and he must toss the loaf out the window before it explodes. Another of the bombs sticks to a beam and Planchet tries to deal with it. As the fuse gets dangerously short, Aramis shakes a bottle of wine and squirts the fuse. He then hands the bottle to Porthos. As he removes his thumb from the mouth of the bottle, a small stream squirts up and into Porthos's face.]

MK: Now that was a happy accident, I'm sure.

MY: *[Referring to the pace of the film and the use of humor.]* It never lets up that's for sure.

[The gates of La Rochelle open. Dozens of the enemy rush down the hill toward the musketeers position with guns and ladders. They are in danger of being overrun. Athos suggests the push on the top of the structure and thus cause it to topple over onto the enemy.]

MK: *[Referring to the top of the structure.]* So they'd added all that on top.

MY: They added it.

[Athos tells them, "Push for your lives, gentlemen." They push and the wall topples over onto the enemy, momentarily buying them some time to escape. But only momentarily, as the shots soon begin ringing out again. York watches as Roy Kinnear, as Planchet, attempts to gather up all the weaponry and follow his master. He comments somewhat sadly...]

MY: Roy is wonderful. He's still mourned—so sorely missed.

MK: Yes, it was so— the circumstances under which he passed away.

[Character actor Roy Kinnear, who played the comic role of Planchet in all three Musketeer films, died tragically at the age of 54, in the hospital shortly after taking a fall from his horse while filming The Return of the Musketeers in 1989. Although rumors abounded that he had died of a heart attack, he had actually fractured his pelvis and experienced a fair amount of hemorrhaging. He had responded well to traction and was expected to recover. His sudden and unexpected death was a tremendous shock to all involved in the production. Mr. York recounts the incident, in some detail, in his autobiography, pp. 404-405.]

MK: So you think it was due to the trauma from the fall that—

[This was a sensitive area for York and a subsequent conversation with William Hobbs confirmed that it continues to be a difficult subject with Richard Lester as well.]

MY: Would you like a cup of tea?

MK: That would be great.

MY: All right.

[Mr. York left to arrange for afternoon. Upon his return, the interview continues. The final scenes has the musketeers on their way to retrieve Constance, whom the musketeers have safely—or so they thought—secreted away in a convent. In actuality, Rochefort and Milady de Winter know exactly where she is and are also on their way to the same convent. Rochefort's men are already there.]

MK: Now, where in sequence *[of the shooting schedule]* was this shot?

MY: No idea. I remember there was an incredible shot and I did it myself. I must have been crazy.

[As the tired musketeers stop to have a drink and allow their horses to rest, D'Artagnan is distressed to see Rochefort and Milady de Winter pass by in their coach. He attempts to board the coach and is knocked to the ground. It is now a race to see who can get to Constance first, her saviors or her would be murderers.]

MK: Jumping up onto the *[Referring to D'Artagnan jumping onto the coach]...*

MY: No, that was one thing—though that was pretty crazy as well—No, not as crazy as what I do next; this —

[D'Artagnan attempts to mount his horse in pursuit of Rochefort's coach. Unfortunately, the cinch has been loosened and the saddle slips around sending the distressed young man yet again into the dirt.]

MY: Right under the hooves. The stirrup was—that was truly certifiable.

[D'Artagnan and the musketeers are riding hard and attempting to gain entrance to the convent. D'Rochefort and Milady de Winter arrive first. A master shot reveals the convent and a three- or four- story structure—a wooden addition constructed by Hollywood magic-makers. The musketeers arrive. The stage is set for the final confrontation.]

MY: That was added on.

MK: I always assumed that was so they could burn it down. So we've got those fights your wife shot the stills for coming up.

MY: *[Referring to the fights Hobbs staged for the concluding*

scenes of the film.] He has pretty wild fights—down and dirty. Physical. Lots of punching and kicking.

[The musketeers engage several of Rochefort's henchmen outside the convent and near the wooden extension.]

MY: There, I know I did that just after lunch.

MK: Just after lunch—fighting amongst the goats—*[amused]* great.

[D'Artagnan traps an enemy on the ground by crossing two swords across his throat. When he attempts to escape—his throat is cut. But the young musketeer soon finds himself in a field facing off against two more adversaries.]

MK: As I recall you have a great fight coming up out in a field where you make use of a scarecrow—

MY: *[Referring to the emotion driving the musketeers and how they are fighting.]* They're angry, aren't they? The fighting and all that. Blazing mad. Too much has happened now.

[Porthos dives for his sword and reverses the point, while lying on the floor, just in time for one of Rochefort's men to impale himself on it. The mortally wounded man falls forward onto the rapier, driving it even deeper into his body, and then tumbles down a flight of stairs.]

MK: Ow—falling on the sword—

MY: We all wore breastplates. Whenever anyone had to do something like that.

[Porthos has placed a gun with a smoking match in some hay. This has resulted in a fire that is quickly raged out of control. He is now walking across a beam in boots sporting stacked heels while the beam is burning out from underneath him. Unarmed he is faced with an enemy at the end of the beam. He calls for a sword and Aramis quickly dispatches an enemy and tosses Porthos the man's rapier. He avoids the enemy's cut, thrusts the man through, and gives him a disdainful whack with the blade as the man falls into the flames below. Shortly thereafter, Aramis dispatches a foe with spinning parry one while he stabs his opponent with his parrying dagger—while he faces away from him.]

MK: That's a lovely move—that spin—very nice.

MY: *[Referring to that portion of the convent now engulfed in flames.]* That's all highly controlled.

[Porthos, in an attempt to evade the fire, grabs onto a rope and slides down to the ground. As he arrives, his tunic is on fire. After dancing about a bit, he finally drops to the ground to put out the flames.]

MK: There's a friend of mine who kind of specializes in doing burns and—I find it rather scary. Gas jets run

throughout the structure?

MY: Yes, oh yeah. It's all strictly under control.

[D'Artagnan is now quite busy fighting off two of antagonists out in the middle of plowed field—complete with a scarecrow. D'Artagnan grabs a stick serving as the scarecrow's arm and uses it to fend off attacks. He then draws one of his enemies toward a tree that he uses to bounce off of, quickly change directions, and wound his opponent.]

MK: That's a fun move. Did Bill Hobbs give that to you? That bit at the tree? Bouncing off the tree—that's nice.

MY: Yes! Very creative! Great fun!

[D'Artagnan can finally look inside the convent for Constance. But he arrives too late. Milady de Winter has strangled her with a rosary. As the distraught D'Artagnan leaves the room, Lester has a lengthy tracking shot that follows the actor, staying glued on his face. The intense pain of the loss of his love is clearly evident.]

MK: Lester sure kept the camera on you. I mean when you come out of this room.

MY: Well that was his way of doing it—he's got a camera tracking underneath.

MK: That's a nice long take. Really gets to follow you through a full sequence.

[D'Artagnan spots Rochefort emerging from the convent chapel.]

MY: *[Almost as if commenting as D'Artagnan, "There you are, you bastard!"]* Ah ha!

[He is advised by the Cardinal's living blade, "Be advised Gascon, turn and run." Instead, he ferociously attacks. Now the final confrontation between the hero and the villain of the piece begins. This fight can only end in the death of one, the other, or both. The fight begins in the dust at the foot of the steps leading into the chapel. Soon it ranges up the steps to the door of the chapel. Rochefort avoids one of D'Artagnan's desperate thrusts and slips into the chapel as the point is buried in the door behind him.]

MK: Do you know if this was under-cranked at all or—

MY: Yeah, you can tell. I mean, you're not meant to tell. Just slightly. You know—actually, I'm not sure. I don't know—to be honest.

MK: Did you find the weapons heavy.

MY: In a way, it was easier, you know, kind of—slowed things down a little bit. Actually, it did help to have that heft.

MK: I love the way Bill Hobbs uses the whole weapon.

Even the hilt.

[As D'Artagnan enters the chapel, Rochefort suddenly attacks from the flank.]

MK: Now is that Christopher Lee in that shot?

MY: He did a wonderful job.

[D'Artagnan attempts to strike Rochefort with a hilt strike to the crotch while grasping his own blade.]

MK: Beautiful—there's what he calls the *golf swing*, or so I've heard that's what he calls it. Now, did you rehearse this on location, or did you rehearse this, in the gym before you came on out.

MY: Good point—I know while they were shooting all the burning fire, we were busy with what we were doing. You'd come out, ride out, and rehearse the fight, you know. When I wasn't actually filming one I was rehearsing one.

[D'Artagnan finds himself suddenly disarmed. He uses his gloved hands to deflect a couple of well-placed thrusts. He then attempts to grab Rochefort's blade, only to have his plan thwarted when the villain quickly withdraws his blade. D'Artagnan finds himself staring at a sliced open glove—and a sliced open palm as well.]

MK: Right—that's a nice move?

MY: He had a *wonky* knee too. The fights were very demanding. Oliver Reed was run through the hand as well—

MK: So, Christopher Lee was—injured. When you shot the final fight?

[Lee, in a recent interview, said he tore ligaments in his left knee while shooting a scene where he was fighting with Oliver Reed in a sheep pen.]

MY: Christopher—yes!.

[D'Artagnan recovers his blade and attempts one last desperate thrust. D'Rochefort parries it with his main gauche. He then twists his wrist and, using the sword breaker barbs on the side of the dagger's blade, snaps off the tip of D'Artagnan's sword. The distressed boy rises and comes to en guard. D'Rochefort attacks with a rapier thrust and dagger thrust; but he leaves his weapons extended a little longer than he should. D'Artagnan uses his arm to sweep Rochefort's arms up, slips underneath, and runs the shocked and exhausted Rochefort through—with his broken blade. The passionate thrust goes through his adversary's body and into a large Bible on a stand behind him. The villain stands, in disbelief, pinned to the good book. Slowly his arms begin to droop. His grip loosens on his weapons, they drop from his hands and he collapses to the floor. D'Artagnan has avenged the death of his

beloved Constance.]

MK: And that just has to be one of the great kills in the genre.

MY: Yes. That was very good

MK: Was that written into the script?

MY: Well I don't remember. Perhaps Lester or Bill Hobbs have the script.

MK: The Cardinal's man run through and into the Bible. You guys must have been exhausted after shooting those scenes.

MY: Totally spent.

MK: I bet. But a very impressive fight. Any less would have disappointed.

[The musketeer has been condemned and they will see her executed.]

MK: Now, where did they get this guy, who played the Executioner of Lisle?

MY: Flew in from England. Small parts, flew down for the day.

[The Executioner commanders a small boat and rows out to a small island in the middle of a river. With glint of the sun on his falling sword and the dull sound of a chop, Milady de Winter has been executed. As the musketeers begin to leave, the musketeers old nemesis, Jussac, and a group of the Cardinal's Guard ride up and arrest the musketeers in the name of the Cardinal. They have no choice. Out numbered and out ranked, they must acquiesce.]

MK: Now this guy who played Jussac—is he English?

MY: No, he's Spanish.

[D'Artagnan finds himself with an impromptu audience with the Cardinal. It appears the Cardinal will have him executed for doing away with Milady de Winter.]

MK: Now this is a lovely little scene you have with Charleton Heston.

MY: Yeah. He brought with him that old Hollywood gravitas. Believe it or not, Heston was only there for a relatively short time. So all his stuff was done—together.

[But D'Artagnan has carte blanche..."For good of the state, and by my order, the bearer has done what has been done." Signed, Richelieu.]

MK: That little flip of the wrist where he discards you and he says—

MY: *[Amused; intoning Richelieu's intention.]* Goodbye.

MK: Wonderful moment there where Richelieu tears up the *carte blanche*; and you wonder if you've undone yourself by giving it to him. Is he going to play by the rules?

[The montage sequence at the end of the film includes a clip from the beginning of the film where D'Artagnan attempts to swing on a rope and knock Rochefort off of his horse. He ends up, undecorously, sliding into a muddy puddle as Rochefort rides placidly by.]

MK: Did you do that turn, swing on the rope there?

MY: Yes, I did—I think I did, I —that I did. That's in England. They needed just a— so we went—somewhere and just shot that one scene.

MK: Where do you place *The Three Musketeers* and *The Four Musketeers* in your career? You've had a wonderful breadth to your career, but when I look at the people who have done these sorts of films, swashbucklers, I can't think of anyone who has done more of them than you.

MY: Well, I was very pleased. There was a book, you probably have it, that came out— *Swordsmen of the Screen* or something—you probably have it.

[York was referring to Jeffrey Richard's *Swordsmen of the Screen: From Douglas Fairbanks to Michael York*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1977]

MK: Yes, Jeffrey Richard's survey of Hollywood swordsmen.

MY: But I mean, as far as placing it—I don't know, because I still have, hopefully, a lot more to do.

MK: I, for one, certainly hope to see you fighting again.

MY: And then along come these surprises— like, you know, being a musketeer again.

MK: *Le Femme Musketeer*.

MY: Yes. Never say never again...

MK: So, who knows, you may find yourself picking up the sword again at some point.

MY: But the *Musketeers*—it's a very happy memory. It was a wonderful summer to spend in Spain, full of cultural enrichments— you know, when you spend that amount of time working with people, you really get an insight. And it was a Spain that's changed forever. It was Franco's Spain you know. It was still sort of feudal, and—so in a sense perfect for this kind of movie. I'm sure it's all been tremendously modernized and upgraded and so on. You know, Spain had to come out of that slow sleep after the war—

with terrible horrors of the Civil War and so on and you know, then join with the European community, becoming a monarchy. And now it's fantastic, I love going back there because it's so—hip—but I'm very hopeful that our musketeer movie will carry on, the new one, will carry on the tradition.

MK: Well, come what may, I think you've certainly secured your place in the pantheon of Hollywood swashbucklers.

MY: I must say, that gives me—[referring to *Anchor Bay's* DVD release of the two movies in a single package]—I don't often look at my movies, but when this came out I did look at it again. Because, you know, when you see prints that are degraded and broken up—you know, I'm just happy an older film, made in the 70s, still has such appeal.

MK: Thank you for the gift. It was quite unexpected—and sincerely appreciated.

MY: You're very welcome.

MK: Well, this has been such a pleasure. These films had such an impact upon the direction of my career. Stage combat has been, for over twenty-five years now, a tremendous part of what I do. I do intend to contact Richard Lester and Bill Hobbs for subsequent articles. I've worked with so many people that have been influenced by Bill Hobbs. He's certainly influenced me through his work in films. Not just the original *Musketeer* films, but the *Return of the Musketeers*, *Robin and Marian*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *The Duellists*—and so many others. His films are models, an education for those of us who do this.

MY: He's certainly well respected

MK: I don't think anyone's achieved the status Bill Hobbs has enjoyed.

MY: Well, I'd agree—he's certainly achieved a lot.

MK: No one has yet to come close to his list of accomplishments. Last I heard, he was over in Germany. I don't know if he's still living there or not.

MY: Yeah, I heard that.

MK: But I'll find out. I'm hoping to contact some of your colleagues in the film, like Frank Finely and Christopher Lee—and try to get some input from them as well.

MY: Great—so, I hope you got what you were looking for.

MK: Very much so. Thank you—for an interesting interview and for some of the most exciting swordfights in cinematic history.

MY: Sure—my pleasure!

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The Ultimate Screen Swashbuckler

by Derek Ware

Reprinted from *The Sword*

Serious students of the cinema have long disputed which star has the most appearances with a dueling weapon in his hand. For many years the names Douglas Fairbanks senior and junior, Errol Flynn and Basil Rathbone reigned pre-eminent; closely followed by Stewart Granger, Louis Hayward and Cornel Wilde.

After research spanning forty years, the score adds up thusly: Douglas Fairbanks junior made six films of this genre, Fairbanks senior seven, Errol Flynn and Basil Rathbone also seven—incidentally they met face to face only twice, in *Captain Blood* (1935) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), —Stewart Granger scores eight, Louis Hayward nine and Cornel Wilde eleven.

Each of them, however, has been eclipsed by a veteran character actor better remembered as a star of horror films, though Christopher Lee appearances in this category account for a mere seven years of his fifty-seven-year-old career. Lee sweeps the field with a score of thirteen feature films and half as many appearances again in television series, serials and television movies.

Lee's tuition commenced with fencing lessons from his father, a former army champion and expert at foil, *sabre*, *epee* and bayonet. This stood him in good stead when, as a twenty-seven year-old actor, Lee junior was cast as a Spanish captain in the 1950 film version of *Captain Horatio Hornblower*. Not only was he required to speak fluent Spanish, but he was expected to engage the American star Gregory Peck, who had no knowledge of swordplay, in a convincing exhibition of *cut and thrust*, while ensuring no accidental injury befell either of them. Lee came through with flying colors but as he recounted: "It was a near run 'thing' due to the fact that the area in which we had to fight was the *fo'c'sle* of an eighteenth century man o'war, which didn't leave any room for error. As we were both over six-feet, two-inches with long legs, when we bent our knees in the *en garde* position, the fighting area was cut by half." At the safe conclusion of the scene Peck claimed they had both come through unscathed due entirely to Lee's expertise.

The following year he crossed swords with the legendary action star Burt Lancaster in *The Crimson Pirate*. On this occasion, it was Lee who had reason to be grateful. "Burt Lancaster, more than anyone, taught me the essence of screen swordplay, which is to bring out the dramatic content of a fight without losing any of the technically correct movements of competitive fencing. In other words, to exaggerate the movements and make use of ducking, bodily avoidance, the clinch and pauses, in order to allow the acting performance to come through, giving the action light and shade."

Over the next five years he found himself in demand as an actor who could fence. For a costume drama entitled *That Lady*, he found himself cast once more as a Spanish captain crossing swords with a former leading man of silent film fame, Gilbert Roland. Lee recalled: "During the fight rehearsals, Roland wore glasses which he removed for the scene as *action* was called, charging at me shouting out in Spanish. I mentally translated this, realizing that what he was saying was: 'I can't see a thing without my spectacle. Watch out for your head!'" As a result of his coolness under fire, Roland insisted Lee take part in every ensuing fight scene on the film.

Lee was less fortunate in his next engagement fighting with medieval broadswords opposite the most celebrated screen swordsman of his time, Errol Flynn. Although the weapons were blunted for theatrical purposes, they were nevertheless forged tempered steel. "Flynn delivered his first cut higher than we had rehearsed," recalls Lee. "I parried low and was forced to perform the rest of the fight with the little finger of my right hand hanging off. It was never set properly." When showing the offending digit, which is indeed permanently bent at an odd angle, he philosophically shrugs. They crossed swords again on Flynn's television series *The Errol Flynn Theatre*—this time without mishap.

Next Lee faced a pre-*Saint*/James Bond Roger Moore in a rugged two-handed broadsword fight in an episode of the *Ivanhoe* series. He also fenced in *The Douglas Fairbanks Theatre* though not, alas, clashing steel with the veteran swashbuckler, Doug junior, himself.

Throughout the 1960s, Lee was in constant demand as an actor/swordsman for such films as *Pirates of Blood River*, *Devil Ship Pirates* and *She*. In the 1970s and 80s audiences saw him as the arch-villain Rochefort in *The Three Musketeers*, *The Four Musketeers*, and *Return of the Musketeers*. Then, at an age when he was certainly entitled to hang up his fencing gauntlets, he took another hack-and-slash role in *Mio My Mio* (aka *The Land of Far Away*).

For a decade it seemed he had finally sheathed his screen rapiers. Then, to the surprise of film enthusiasts everywhere, he returned to test himself with new skills employing the light sabre in *Star Wars 2—Attack of the Clones* and a magical stave in *Lord of the Rings*.

In the course of his film career—fifty of them *swashing his buckle*—Lee has been coached in screen swordplay by many of the great fight directors of the last five decades. These include Charles Alexis, Bob Anderson, Patrick Crean, Peter Diamond, Rupert Evans and William Hobbs. At the age of eighty with the bearing of a man twenty-five years younger and a voice that has lost none of its resonance, he is prepared to report for work on any sequels to the above-mentioned films. Has he a regret? He admits wistfully: "I would have loved to play Captain Hook." But surely time exists?



PET PEEVES IN THE MARTIAL ARTS Part I

by Robert W. Dillon, Jr.

The most powerful justification for stage combat as a discipline resides squarely with the notion of *getting it right*. It is these discipline specific methods and meanings which gives it its dignity. Otherwise one might just as well let directors and actors hack away, confusing drama with actor-risk and rapiers with *epees*.

The dignity of stage combat lies most clearly in its desire to integrate *combative* practices and careful *hoplological* inquiry within the safe embrace of the theatrical arts. Through this integrative effort, one continues to gain historical and anthropological knowledge, or, to use that particularly useful term, *hoplological*. It seems clear that the current market-interest in swords and swordsmanship *both* follows *and* nurtures interest in stage combat as a specialized discipline. All this began with matters European. Today, matters Asian are getting more and more attention as stage combat comes back around to notice the so-called *martial arts*—the crazes surrounding which had just begun to pass as interest in *stage combat* began to arise.

Martial Arts (Schmartial Arts)

One of the easiest reasoning fallacies to fall victim to is the dreaded *distinction without difference*. In this case, *martial arts* seems to mean *Oriental* martial arts are distinct from *Occidental* martial arts. But in what ways? The fact that *Asian martial arts* exist means that *non-Asian* martial arts also exist. All martial arts are martial arts—European, American, Japanese, Indonesian, Spanish. On the other hand, every example of *martial arts* possesses differences from all others. Researches into species of weapons, techniques, or practice cannot be too *specific* after all—just like those all important distinctions between rapiers and *tucks*. Much confusion and imprecision result from *generic* reasoning and usage that confuses *orders*, *families*, or *genera* with *species*, the classic fault of this sort: distinction without difference. References to *martial arts* make convenient linguistic shorthand, but they do little more than that and seem badly out of place in a field where exactitude in research and communication grow more important each day.

According to most dictionaries the term *martial arts* means arts associated with war, warfare, and military activities. The word *martial* comes from the name of the Roman war god, Mars; nothing at all Asian about that.¹ *Martial arts* *connotes* all orders, families, genera, and species of martial art. It does not denote Asian things only. Simply put, Richard Lester's musketeers movies ought to be called *British martial arts movies*, the films of Errol Flynn, *Hollywood martial arts movies*, the films of Jet Li, *Hong Kong martial arts movies*, and so forth. Otherwise the distinction without difference fallacy may poison research and discourse. Furthermore, the Asian assumption behind the term's use comes primed with other somewhat suspect assumptions. For instance, assumptions about just how tight that association with military activities must be before something fits within this generalized definition results in some pretty loose liaisons.

In fact, much that is called *martial art* has tenuous connection to battles and warfare. For instance, *karate-do* evolved from peasant culture in Okinawa not from military culture. The Korean military, on the other hand, teaches *taekwondo* as a part of basic military training although actual personal military defense tactics do not include many spinning or jumping kicks. The *Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu* of swordsmanship originated during an era of heightened military activity but virtually all of the classical martial *ryu* thrived fully only after the Tokugawa brought an enforced peace.

Thus, generic usage of the term *martial arts* suffers from a confusion of denotative meanings and connotative ones and results in a very tenuous and problematic form of classification and definition—the very heart of research. A more *generic* usage of the term will simply be clearer and more precise. Such usage covers all forms of combative practice, including Western ones. Certainly if *karate-do* and *judo* are martial arts, if *tai chi* and *aiki-do* are, then Western boxing must also be one. Use of the phrase in *specific* reference (as if it were denotatively specific) to Asian practices and disciplines—*kung fu*, *karate*, and *taekwondo* being the most common models—confuses and confounds and raises questionable flags. It does this in part because it fails to account for the many cultures and societies (and orders, families, genera, and species of martial art within them) that actually make up our so-called Asians. Japan, China, and Korea barely skim the surface of the whole of Asia. These geographic distinctions lead to confusion of generic *distinction* with specific *differences*; degrees of difference with absolute distinction; one's knowledge of some part of some whole with (impossible) knowledge of the whole. Many styles of Chinese boxing (*kung fu* means *accomplishment technique*, *ch'uan fa* is the term for *boxing*) existed in the past and many of those have survived to today; they are a group of related entities, a *family* or a *genus* but certainly not a *species*. The same thing is true of the Okinawan-Japanese form, *karatedo*. At least thirty styles or forms of *karate* now exist—not counting the many Western adaptations. Even the familiar forms of *aikido* and *tai chi* come in many varieties and styles. That is why they do not get capitalized. They are not proper names; they are general nouns. Specific styles are capitalized. So, distinction without difference results in both false induction from misunderstood particulars to flimsy generalities and in false deduction from conscious or unconscious over-generalization without reference to actual particulars. *Martial arts* alone means no specific thing but, martial arts. It does not, as it seems to mean in its popular usage, mean *karadee*. Every actual, specific, distinct, martial art alone is a specific thing different from all others to specific degrees and in specific ways but not distinct from the general taxonomic *order* called martial arts. Noted scholars like Kim Taylor, John Donahue, and Karl Friday have stated that the term martial arts is useful only in popular forums and that classification beyond species of martial art is problematic at best. In fact, say these and many other scholars, the only meaningful discourse about martial arts will be specific about the kind, provenance, style, and teach-

ers of the martial art being discussed. They also suggest, in no uncertain terms, the silliness of suggesting, through use of the term, a sense of Oriental superiority and Eastern esoterica. Obviously such elevated and romantic ideas have little basis in fact.

That Was Not Then, This Is Now

Judo, *karatedo*, *aikido*, *kendo*, and *taekwondo* are modern phenomenon with pretty straight forward goals and mundane origins. They are products not of some imagined mystic past but of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Karate (or more correctly, *karate-do*) goes all the way back to the mystic era between the world wars. Gichen Funakoshi pioneered what he came to call *karatedo* (at first meaning *Chinese fist way* and later changed to *Void fist way*) as an element of physical education during Japan's modern cultural and social reformation in the 1900s. In so doing, he formalized a *new* and Japanese² art based in older Sino-Okinawan disciplines. After World War II the style of Funakoshi and other adaptations (literally hundreds) came to the West producing many forms of *karatedo*.

Ueshiba Morihei integrated *jujutsu*, Confucian ethics, and Shinto, Buddhist, and Omoto Kyo teleologies, to form *aikido* shortly after World War II. Several of his students, many of which still teach, broke off to form their own cognate styles. Sometimes this was done with the permission and approval of a *sensei*, sometimes not. In turn the next generation of teachers moved out from the stream and so on. Currently, many styles and forms of *aikido* exist worldwide.

Taekwondo was founded by General Choi in the 1950. He based his work upon older forms but no single, ancient style or form is present in the final syncretization that was officially named *taekwondo*. Choi even made heavy use of Japanese *karatedo* as he formalized his system. Thus, strange as the cross cultural usage may seem when seriously considered, *taekwondo* can rightly be called Korean *karate*.

Karate is Japanese. It is not Korean or Chinese. Koreans call *kendo*, *kumdo*. The Korean word for *dojo* is *dojang*. A Chinese teacher is called a *sifu*. These are not just semantic distinctions. Carefully explained overlapping of lexicons go a long way to prevent undue confusion and pedantic skepticism. Someone referring to Chinese *karate* should go on and explain what they mean. It could be that a Chinese person holds rank in a Japanese art. It could be that someone of any number of eclectic mixes is at work. It could be the conflation of language and provenance is purposeful and honorable and, in some way, correct. Meanwhile one should be very afraid of teachers who patch provenance and history and lexicons together *willy-nilly*—heaps, do not make wholes and ignorance is not always bliss.

Putting the ancillary importance of semantics, lexicography, provenance, and orthography aside, historical confusion not only mistakes the new for the old but sometimes mistakes *that* for all that exists. Many old Japanese martial systems, founded starting in the late fourteenth century survive extant today. Since these forms have been handed down through a process marked by a

high order of cultural conservatism, very little about them has changed. These extant forms offer living documentation of battlefield and personal combatives of immense value to combative historians in the West. Meanwhile, *ancient martial arts* do not include *karatedo*, *judo*, *kendo*, *taekwondo*, or *aikido* except as modern, cognate forms.

The complex history of martial arts demands a complex accounting even if only through a refusal to oversimplify. Stage combat students ought to know that truly ancient practices survive only rarely. Stage combat students ought to know that *martial arts* does not equal *karate* and that neither of these terms indicates anything specific.

I'm Gonna Belt You!

Belt ranking, called *kyu-dan* (*kyu* equals level or degree, *dan* equals rank), originated during the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) in Japan. Korea later borrowed the idea. Americans adopted belt ranking for all kinds of martial practices (no matter where they came from), starting in the 60s. Belt ranking is neither universal in the Orient, ancient, nor exotic.

Pragmatic to the core, Jigoro Kano and Gichen Funakoshi, founders of modern *judo* and *karatedo* respectively, turned their arts into broadly popular pursuits that could be included in the physical education curriculum of the new public schools. The *kyu-dan* system institutionalized practices that had been more-or-less personal prior to that time.

Only Japanese martial systems that wished to become part of the *shinbudo*, or *new martial arts*, adopted the new system of testing and ranking their students. Conservative arts, sometimes called the *kobudo* or *old martial arts*, kept their old ways of awarding certifications.

The methods of awarding teaching licenses link up with the *kyu-dan* system but in a complex and not-always-direct way. Most organizations require certain *dan* levels from their prospective teachers, along with character references, and a certain number or years of study and age before granting teaching licenses. Many *shinbudo* systems start teachers at *renshi* (instructor), move through *kyoshi* (professor), and reach the top with *hanshi* (master teacher.) *Sensei* literally means something close to *initiation-correct*. Students use the term as an honorific suffixed to, *not* prefixed to (Jones-*sensei*, not *sensei* Mark) their teachers' family names. It is not a formal title.

Kyu-dan ranking often has nothing to do with skill *per se*. It may be awarded, especially at the very rare and highest *dan* ranks, fifth *dan* and higher,³ for contributions to an organization, teaching accomplishments, character and charisma, and as commemoration of years of service to the organization.⁴ Rank, in fact, does not, except in the most rudimentary way, suggest much about accomplishments, abilities, qualifications, or skill levels *per se*. Instead, belt ranking represents public evidence of progress towards the specified goals of an organization, *whatever* those goals may be. No doubt that anyone can and will misuse all this—willfully or not.



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Some arts use the *kyu-dan* system but do not actually wear belts of any color. These systems will usually have a ranking board displayed in each *dojo*. On it a student's name appears, inscribed on a small wooden placard which slides into a long frame, placed in position according to level or ranking—one's placard is inserted in the end of the frame when one begins his training and slid forward as he advances. The oldest systems that adopted the *kyu-dan* method of ranking (and actually used belts to show it) usually used only white for the *kyu* levels and black for the *dan* ranks. Some later added brown to the top of the *kyu* levels. Various colors to indicate the different *kyu*-levels, belt-width requirements for distinguishing further between levels, and a variety of stripes and *tapes*, or bands added to the ends of belts, developed over time. As a rule older systems of ranking tend to be much simpler than newer ones.

No overarching governing bodies exist that control belt ranking—anywhere. As a matter of fact, most martial arts schools and many martial systems, especially in the West, operate as independent, *local* organizations. Even in Japan, only individual *shinbudo* and *kobudo* organizations offer standards and practices that control or mandate ranks and teaching licenses and only *within* their own organizations. The few attempts to form umbrella organizations function somewhat shakily, however, as all martial arts systems, they are plagued with the social reality called politics.

Likewise, no unified organization mandates sport regulations, standards, or practices for martial arts. *Judo* and *kendo* organizations have become more centralized over the years. Still, no such thing as a world championship in *kendo* or *judo* actually exists. It is possible to win an Olympic gold medal in *judo* competition and *taekwondo* has struggled towards the Olympics but that is simply not the same as holding world championship titles. Thus, hundreds of world championships culminating literally in thousands of tournaments are organized through hundreds of separate organizations. Billy Blanks' claim to World Champion status certainly sells video tapes, but what exactly does such a claim mean?

Belt ranks can mean a lot in so far as they represent a particular relationship between a particular student and a particular organization or teacher at a particular place and in a particular time. But the claims—real or fake—alone mean nothing without further reference to teachers and organizations. Claiming to hold bundles of black belts, in and of itself, means nothing in and of itself. Unqualified claims listing numbers and colors of belts without further information should raise at least an eyebrow.

What stage combat person is not somewhat interested in lineage? Even the best lineages, teaching certificates, affiliations, and bona fides do not add up to anything important in certain individual cases. Some talented and self-taught Graphic Development International (GDIs) do just fine without them; black belts have no special magical potency. If one could just begin to understand the *relative* value of a *given* rank in a *given* martial system under a *given* teacher at a *given* time, that would be just fine.

Now, Another Episode of Samurai . . .

Samurai sword fighting is another one of those terms stuck to an urban myth and perpetuated by popular usage. That it is now a

common proper *English* term does not, however, excuse its continued misuse.

The term *samurai* entered the general American lexicon probably around the time that Japanese films began to be shown in New York and Los Angeles in the first decades after World War II. *Samurai* literally means *one who serves* and was used to designate only a specific set of ranks within the warrior class (*buke*) during specific, limited periods of history. *Bushi* means warrior, in the sense of a member of the *buke* class, while *bujin* might be said to mean knight.

The social and cultural life of the *samurai* never matched the popular myth. These people came in as wide an array of backgrounds, temperaments, and personalities as any other group of humans. Some were outstanding soldiers and statesmen and generals and some were lazy and stupid. Just like the warrior classes in Europe, the individual Japanese warrior often turned out to be as mediocre or malignant as any. Suffice it to say that these folks did not all embody some high-blown ideal of martial and personal strength. For instance, few *samurai/bushi* actually pursued martial arts in the contemporary sense of that phrase, as they were too busy making a living. During peacetime they worked or managed farms, ran the country, engaged in mercantile endeavors, or worked some craft or trade. The rise of the middle classes (comprised largely of displaced military retainers) in Japan during the long and enforced peacetime of the Tokugawa saw warfare channeled into martial art and warriors re-made into martial artists (or bureaucrats). During wartime most *samurai* relied on basic training and personal experience to survive combat.

The West's pre-eminent martial scholar, the late Donn Draeger, has the final word about *samurai*:

Though the martial history of Japan covers approximately two millennia, it is for only a very small part of this time that classical warriors were functioning as a vigorous institution constant in style. . . . By supposing that all Japanese fighting men formed a single group united by common principles and ideals it is easy to ignore the fact that throughout Japanese history, men of combat have stemmed from different social strata, entered military service for different reasons, utilized different weapons (and thus different fighting techniques, strategies, and tactics), been guided by dissimilar ethics, enjoyed different rights and privileges, and exercised different political positions. Because these are group differences, they are not to be ignored. And in the interest of accuracy, they must not be lumped together under broad generalizations. . . . There were . . . many levels, or ranks, of [fighting men and women] which depended on the warrior's social status, his martial merit, and his position of precedence for the shogun's favor. The samurai was only one such rank, and by no means the highest. . . . Originally, the term samurai referred to servants who waited on the nobility. . . . Even when the

term came to be extended to a certain kind of warrior, probably in the fourteenth century, the connotation of “service” was not completely removed. Because of this limiting background, it is an error to refer to all warriors as samurai or to assume that the samurai, as a group, ruled the nation of Japan either during its periods of military government or at any other time. (Donn Draeger, *Classical Bujutsu*, p.16, 1973.)

Bushido Who?

Draeger asserts in no uncertain terms that no *unified theory* of Japanese warrior culture or society will hold water for long under careful scrutiny. Thus, his statements on the subject of *samurai* also impact popular notions of *bushido*, the supposed *Code of the Samurai*.

Such a code may be mostly mythic. This suggests an important lesson that every fight researcher who attempts to bring a cogent historical or hoplological sensibility to staged combat must deal with: popular sources, translated into English, usually come from *within* a tradition; these are not therefore *independent* sources of historical documentation. Books like *Go Rin no Sho*, by Musashi Miyamoto, *Hagakure*, by Tsunetomo Yamamoto, *Bushido Shoshinsu*, by Taira Shigesuke, and other similar works now available in English translation present particular views in particular cultural and social contexts; the researcher must go deeply into an exploration of those contexts or one’s historical understanding will be flawed. In other words careful and critical appraisal of historical sources forms the core of any successful research methodology.

Most martial arts books and articles—especially those of the *how to* variety—come from within a particular tradition. Thus the stage combat researcher needs to practice careful critical assessment from historical context, relationship to other documentation, nature of the work in question as popular or scholarly, relative objectivity. Most of these can be very useful but as historical or independent and objective documentation they will often come up short.

An idea like *bushido* must be subjected to careful critical unpacking in just this way. Many of its sources have specific axes to grind in specific contexts both cultural and social. As a cultural and social construct *bushido* has a very complex history.

The first warrior’s code came to be called *kyuba-no-michi*, the *Way of the Bow and the Horse*. It institutionalized the country’s *proto-knights*, mounted on horses and armed with bow and arrow but was largely an oral tradition. In later years and in various locations, warriors spoke and wrote of *bukyo* the *Warrior’s Creed* and *shido* the *Gentleperson’s Way*. In 1615 the *Buke-shohatto* or *Laws of the Military Houses* was formulated by the *shogunate*. Interestingly enough many of these codes centered upon regulation and rules of dress and equipage and only tangentially attempted to regulate ethics or morality.⁵ In 1685 Yamaga Soko wrote a

military code which had some social and cultural impact. In the early 18th Century, Yamamoto Tsunetomo, a retired military man who had worked as a government official (he was not primarily a warrior himself) wrote a little book, *Hidden Among Fallen Leaves* or *Hagakure*. Writing a martial code in the most un-martial of times, Yamamoto laments a partly mythological, partly Romantic, and largely imaginary past of noble conflicts and honorable warriors. Finally, in 1900, Nitobe Inazo published an account of warrior manners and mores entitled, *Bushido: the Soul of Japan*. It is important to note that he was Christian, European-educated and thus at least somewhat Western-minded. In it he writes of young initiates into manhood going out to test their first swords upon rocks.

With the emergence of Japan as a modern nation-state at the turn of the century, and for the first time, Japanese began to think of themselves as *Japanese*. With World War II, Japanese nationalistic fervor hit its height with the cry of *One Thousand Years!* or *banzai*. The Emperor’s soldiers imagined themselves (and propaganda supported the idea) a part of an unbroken warrior tradition. Such a unified and unbroken tradition never existed. The concept of *bushido* nevertheless became a thread of the social and cultural fabric of Japan’s national identity. Used and abused in service to Japan’s war efforts, the concept survived the lessons of World War II. It has now trickled out into the popular consciousness of the world where it is both reviled (in the remembrance of the horrors of World War II) and worshipped (in the name of a retro-Romantic and elevationist vision of Japanese warriorship.) So, World War II propaganda and the writings of Nitobe Inazo, a modern man looking back at a mythic past, helped to create the popular notion of an *ancient* written or unwritten code which historically guided the practical or philosophical life of the *bushi*, or warrior.

No justification for an idealized and monadic vision of the Japanese warrior, guided by a monadic code of conduct, and practicing a monadic martial discipline exists. In truth, both *samurai* and *bushido* are metonymic or tropeic terms, now common in contemporary Western usage. Like martial arts, these terms only weakly suggest precise ideas.

Footnotes

1. Someone once suggested that the term *martial arts* was first used to translate the Japanese terms *budo* and *bujutsu*. No compelling evidence exists that this is so.

2. The Okinawans did not invent *karate* (boxers of the Ryukyu islands called their systems *te* or *fist*) in an heroic effort to battle *samurai* oppressors. The Satsuma clan annexed Okinawa in the early 1600s with the *Shogun*’s blessing. Within a generation many Okinawans—who on the whole had no concept of themselves as a nation-state at this time—began to consider themselves Japanese. When Funakoshi, born and bred in Okinawa, took his public school credentials and his *karatedo* to the mainland—himself falling directly into the mythology of his time—he claimed descent from a Japanese warrior family. Another thing: piles of broken bricks and boards aside, *karate* style punching (and the correlated hand conditioning of certain styles) was not designed for punching through Japanese armor. Japanese armors were

often bulletproof. True, a mob armed with rocks can wreak havoc on a platoon of well-trained and well-armed troops even today. A highly skilled unarmed man might have a chance against an under-skilled soldier. But a well-trained swordsman encountering an unarmed farmer possesses something of an advantage. Most of the Satsuma troops carried muskets for dealing with any real resistance. Swordsmen were rare at any time. Thus, it seems highly unlikely that any single unarmed combatant with any brains would ever intentionally go up against an armed and trained swordsman. Even if such an encounter occurred, why would attacking the soldier's armor be a useful tactic?

3. Most systems go no higher than tenth *dan*. Note that at any given time fewer than ten actual, bona fide, Japanese tenth *dan* on earth and alive exist. The number of American men claiming *master* or tenth *dan* status, and under the age of thirty, is astounding to say the least.

4. One should keep a skeptic's eye upon any person calling himself *master*; he is not one. No bona fide *sifu*, *sensei*, or *guru* connected with any traditional martial system is likely to *ever* claim such status. Legitimate martial systems tend to consider mastery as an ongoing process, a pathway common to the most junior student and the most senior teacher. They hold this principle to be as true for the mastery of individual techniques as for a complete repertoire. In fact, teaching *titles* suggest mastery of pedagogy and not technical *mastery*—although a high-ranking teacher must have a high-level mastery of technique of course. Mastery is not finite or final; mastery remains relative until the practitioner dies. As a stage combat *maestro* no doubt knows full well, *mastery* becomes a heavy burden laid onto *the teacher's* shoulders by *the discipline*; a student who decides to tag along slowly takes on some of this burden. When the time ripens the student may, in turn, become a teacher. A sane and sensible teacher avoids the trap of *any* claims to mastery. Instead, the master-teacher shows the student the way the master-teacher performs a technique at a particular stage on their *shared* path. A wary eye should also be kept on anyone under the age of thirty claiming particularly high rank—be doubly dubious about anyone under thirty claiming to be master. Conservative and bona fide organizations do not lightly hand out advanced teaching certifications or high rank (over third *dan* in Japanese arts.) Youth and advanced rank come together only rarely.

5. If one makes this much money per year, besides his taxes he has to provide so many bowmen with such and so equipment, so many mounted soldiers with such and so spare horses, while at court his swords must be mounted thus and so forth. After all ethics and morality remain the hardest thing for social institutions to police while the size and shape of one's battle flags is easy to regulate.



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The 2003 Barn Workshops Report

by J. Allen Suddeth

The Staff and Students of the 2003 National Fight Directors Training Program in South Paris, Maine



The National Fight Directors Training Program met again in 2003 for the twelfth year in a row, at the Celebration Barn Theatre in South Paris, Maine. Students from all over the country and as far away as Australia gathered for two weeks at the end of June to study with Fight Masters J. Allen Suddeth and Chuck Coyl the fine points of becoming professional fight directors. The acting company was led by Certified Teacher, and acting/movement teacher Mark Olsen from Penn State University. The intern was Robert Radkoff-Ek, an advanced Actor/Combatant and Barn veteran.

During the first two days of the workshop, the students made five video films with guest artists film maker A.C. Weary from New York. Over the next two weeks the students studied mask work, contemporary violence, firearm safety, mass battles, site specific choreography, concept Shakespeare, comedy and classical texts. The workshop culminated in an annual public performance, an hour and a half cross section of the work generated during the two-week working retreat. A short list of scenes from this year's Barn Workshops would included: *Romeo and Juliet*, *MacBeth*, *West Side Story*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Henry IV Part 1*, *Getting Out*, *A Couple of White Chicks...*, *Search and Destroy*, *True West*, *Fool for Love*, *Zastrozzi*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *Lonesome West*, and *The Lucky Spot*.

New in 2003 was a provision, passed by the SAFD governing body, that a student's work for the two weeks in residence would count towards a re-certification in unarmed and single sword (other criteria being present, for instance that a student already holds certification). It is hoped that this can become a permanent benefit of attending the Barn workshops.

Participating as students at the 2003 workshop were:

THE STUDENT COMPANY:

Director

Linda Key

Fight Directors

Felicity Steel, Nathan DeCoux,
Henry Layton, Darrell Rushton, Matthew Ellis

Acting Ensemble

Al Foote, Robert Hamilton,
Zorikh Lequidre, Christopher M. Newell,
Maggie MacDonald, John Manzelli,
Melissa Ricketts, Matthew Simon,
Sandy Van Bremen Cohen, Christi Walton

Over \$1,700 of Barn money was raised to help fill the SAFD fund and the Barn is proud to have been responsible for providing nearly \$8,000 to the Society of American Fight Directors over the last four years.



Some Memories of Patrick “Paddy” Crean

Compiled by Linda Carlyle McCollum

Photo by J. Allen Suddeth



Several members of the Society of American Fight Directors had the opportunity to study with Paddy Crean and have shared their experiences in past issues of *The Fight Master*.

April 1978 David Boushey’s “A Day with Paddy Crean.”

David Boushey, the founder of the Society of American Fight Directors, observed Crean at the Vancouver Playhouse Acting School.

I had heard from a number of sources that Paddy Crean was a gentleman of the highest calibre and this commendation was more than reinforced when I had the pleasure to make his acquaintance. What impressed me most was a mixture of humility and absolute professionalism. He knows his craft and finds it quite unnecessary to be pretentious about it. He had paid his dues and his rewards are his many friends and admirers throughout North America and Great Britain.

One thing he told me that made a strong impact on my awareness as a professional fight choreographer was the firm belief that a good Fight Director is also a PR man. It is his job not only to set a fight and see that it is executed properly, but it is also his responsibility to bolster the actor’s confidence in himself; to assure him that he is going to look smashing on opening night—that no one could perform that fight better.

...He is a wealth of information and more than willing to share that knowledge with a young “upstart” Fight Director.

Boushey goes on to say, that “With gentlemen like Paddy Crean as examples of professionalism in the Society of American Fight Directors, we will soon reach those goals set forth in the society’s charter—to promote the art of fight choreography in such a manner that the Fight Director will be an integral part of the theater and cinema.”

Winter 1990 Payson Burt’s “Studying with Paddy Crean”

Payson Burt and Brad Waller went to study with Crean at his home in August of 1989 in Stratford, Ontario, Canada.

To study with Crean had been Burt’s dream since meeting him in 1986 and 1987 at the National Stage Combat Workshop in Memphis. In ‘86 Crean taught during the third week of the work-

shop when everyone was burned out and thinking about the actor/combatant fight test. The next year Burt, as an assistant teacher, got to spend time with Crean watching some of his video tapes in the green room.

Waller and Burt studied with Crean for two weeks, discussing history, technique, safety and a plethora of other information that only someone of Crean’s experience and personal warmth could convey. The day began in Crean’s kitchen with tea at nine in the morning and a discussion of the subject of the day’s study. Then it was off to the Anglican Church of Stratford for class which consisted of technique, choreography and history until two in the afternoon then on to practice and experiment with what had been worked on in class.

Outside of class the two centered their study on learning and adapting Crean’s Hamlet-Laertes fight while putting some of their own ideas into it. They also began digging into the old manuals of Marozzo, Angelo, di Grassi and Saviolo, bringing those ideas and movements back to Crean to see what they could do to make them both safe and exciting to watch. Crean would dissect the movement or phrase and give them detailed notes that would guarantee their safety and be ever so much more exciting to watch. If a movement or action reminded Crean of something, he would launch into an intriguing story and help them see the fight in another dimension.

Three things about Crean as a teacher stood out for Burt.

1) His openness: Paddy told us on the first day that “I am an open book, boys. Whatever you want to borrow or to copy is yours. You know, at my age, I want to give it all away.” He made all his choreography available to us and said “Change what you want, make it your own.”

2) There is no ego involved. He wants us to learn and do well so openly and lovingly that he simply melts your heart and makes you feel very noble and good. It makes you work all the harder to please him. This combined with the storybook setting of Stratford, made for a perfect atmosphere in which to study.

3) His outrageousness as an actor. Paddy loves to act out the fight and he spends much time in rehearsal figuring out just how to make that fight look exciting. Some might say this is overacting the scene, but now I understand how necessary this largeness is in order for the audience to overcome all the other distractions that

a fight inflicts on them.

While in Stratford, Waller and Burt had a chance to watch and participate in some of Crean's competition fencing classes. Burt relates,

Something extraordinary happens to Paddy when he puts on the mask and comes on guard. He hits his stance and he instantly is twenty years younger and a tiger. It was wonderful to watch. There is also no doubt whatsoever, once you are truly fencing with Paddy, that he is the master. His hands and wrists are unbeatable and his timing perfect.

Burt claims that he "can't emphasize enough how valuable my experience with Paddy was to me. It has infected my work in the way I work with a sword, how I look at the fight, and how I convey both of those intentions to the audience. More importantly, Paddy has given me a sense of history, who I am, where I come from and pride in that lineage. "

May 1986 Charles Conwell's "One on One with Paddy Crean."

Conwell studied with him for two weeks privately during January in Stratford, Ontario. Because of the limited time, Conwell chose to focus on Paddy's choreography for the Calgary production of *Dreaming and Dueling*, a modern Canadian play with *epee* fencing, and Paddy's choreography for the Shaw Festival productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* in Niagara-on-the-Lake and in Toronto. They worked together six days a week at the St. James Church which was within walking distance of Paddy's home.

When we began our work on *Dreaming and Dueling*, Paddy lent me his production script, review, photographs, notes and choreography for the Calgary production. He invited me to copy whatever I liked. Paddy describes each fight a a prose story before he writes down the specific choreography. His choreography is written like a dialogue script. We recreated every fight in *Dreaming and Dueling*. These included competitive *epee* matches with masks and jackets, a fantasy eighteenth century duel with mimed weapons, and a climactic duel with sharpened *epees* and no masks.

Paddy also provided a wealth of written material on the two productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* which he had directed for the Shaw Festival. These productions starred Heath Lamberts, a brilliant Canadian *farceur*, in the role of Cyrano. I chose to work on two versions of the Cyrano-Valvert fight in act one. We recreated a 1983 version for a right-handed Valvert and a 1985 version for a left-handed Valvert. There were many bits of comic business to capitalize on the special talents of Heath Lamberts. We concluded our work on Cyrano with my choreographing the Cyrano/Valvert duel, shamelessly stealing

much of Paddy's choreography and adding some of my own, such as the *Conwell coupe*, a quick and flashy move from high *prime* to a yielding *carte* with point threatening center. I am proud to be able to preserve Paddy's classic choreography for *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

In addition to their work on the two plays they created three versions of a brief routine using sabres. One version was exclusively thrusting, another version exclusively cutting and a third version combined both styles of attack. Paddy insisted on all thrusts going directly to the target (usually the center of the torso or the right bicep) and the importance of a sharp but light cut.

Paddy has the lightest touch of any swordsman I have ever fenced with. He was very patient and gallant with my occasional heavy cut or off-target attack: "Charles, I feel I must comment on your last attack."

The conversation with Paddy was as enjoyable as his instruction in swordplay. The two discussed stars, actors, weapons, movies, plays, Ontario's two major theatrical festivals, countless fights, and beautiful women. More than anything else Paddy conveyed a love of people and his work. His sense of humor was always in evidence. He frequently stressed diplomacy. "Make the actors look and feel good. They will have to perform the fight night after night."

An unexpected pleasure was the use of Paddy's library. Conwell read *A History of Dueling, Cut and Thrust Weapons*, and the *Art and History of Personal Combat*. He also enjoyed Paddy's weapon collection and innumerable photographs.

On their last day together Conwell choreographed a turn-of-the-century sabre duel for Paddy and himself. He conceived it for a realistic production but his choreography included some very flamboyant attacks reminiscent of their work on *Cyrano*.

Paddy helped me simplify the fight, make it more tense and more befitting an actual combat with sharps. It was splendid to watch this Errol Flynn swashbuckler take the time to make sure his sabre arm was protected from a stop hit as he moved from parry to counter-cut. Paddy had always stressed psychology and the recreation of tactics moment to moment. Our sabre duel was a good reminder of this important principle.

The Stratford Festival Theatre pooled their resources to reassemble Paddy's original armory and put up a commemorative plaque on the door. Paddy's wife Susan was commissioned to create the plaque. While touring the theatre,—"Paddy showed me the nicks he had left in the festival's thrust stage during his twenty years as Stratford's Fight Master."

The Stratford library has a video-tape created by the University of Michigan which combined an interview with Paddy with a rehearsal and performance of fight sequences in Erik

Fredricksen's *Cyrano*. At the end of this tape Paddy was asked for the secret of his success. He answered, "I am very sensitive to friendship and love."

Winter 1989 Susan Vagedes' "Some Lessons Well Learned."

Susan Vagedes, who is today Susan Eviston-Dunn, studied with Crean in Stratford in October for two weeks focusing on weapons technique, left handed fighting and choreography and endless discussions on "what makes a good fight director."

Since it was during the festival season she had the opportunity to see seven productions including *The Three Musketeers* and *Richard III*. She also met Jean-Pierre Fournier, who along with Paddy, was the resident Fight Director at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

Vagedes chose to bring Brian Byrnes as her partner so that they could exchange roles. Sometimes Paddy stood back and critiqued their work and sometimes Vagedes could play fight director with Paddy and Byrnes being her students. Paddy worked with them nearly every day and made sure they never had a dull moment.

Vagedes felt she learned a number of lessons working with Paddy.

Paddy's attention to detail I found to be a daily amazement. In researching his fight scripts I found he left no stone unturned. His specificity towards props, weapons, style and research was thoroughly notated. He was relentless in his efforts for fights that made his actors look good, yet still served the purpose of the script. As part of our homework assignments, Brian and I restaged one of Paddy's *Cyrano De Bergerac* and one of his *Hamlet* sequences. Due to the thoroughness of Paddy's fight script, we restaged these with ease. Included in each script was the original notation as well as any changes that happened during the rehearsal process including possible alternate endings. The process at times was quite evident and a valuable learning tool. At times I could sense the relentless hours he had put into diagrams showing just movement patterns, such as the the thirty-odd poster size pages for his *Treasure Island*, illustrating the mass battle scenes step by step. His notation included how to build props, weapons and special effects. Paddy is a man who understands his field not only from the creative and choreographic sense but also from the technical and managerial side as well. He encouraged us to make it all a part of our training. I have learned that this attention to detail is one of the criteria that makes the difference between an average fight director and a good fight director.

Every morning we would have tea with Paddy

at his home and discuss at length what makes a good fight director. Paddy's comments were always tailored to fit our particular needs as we are struggling to make our place in the fight world. An important lesson I feel I learned and need to remain ever conscience of is that my purpose is to make my ACTORS look good and to do justice to the script and not to try to showcase ME and my choreography. I feel I improve with this as time passes, but I must always keep this thought in the back of my mind. It is possible to get lost in showing yourself off, thus losing sight of your actors. Use them and their ideas and let your work enhance their work. It is hard, when you have such a strong desire to do well, not to over-choreograph for the actors and the script. They won't all move as well as you or have your particular style. A good fight director is sensitive to the movement skills of the actors and must have the ability to elevate them with his choreography rather than inflict them with choreography. It seems so simple but can so easily be forgotten. It must be a collaborative effort with the production ensemble. Paddy, even with his knowledge and experience, was always ready to collaborate with us, asking our opinions on his choreography and how it could be changed to suit our bodies. He encouraged us to always play the gracious diplomat, which he, of course, does quite well, and never turn a deaf ear to your actors' complaints or suggestions.

One last point I will share with you is the need to study competitive sabre, *epee*, or foil. This had been told to me before my many of our Fight Masters but I suppose it took one-on-one with Paddy to impress this upon me. I have begun my studies in this area and highly encourage others who have not had this training to do so as well. You should also try to work with as many of our Fight Masters as possible. The eclectic training can heighten your ability to adapt to numerous styles and techniques.

There were a number of lessons I learned in Stratford that would be impossible to share with you. They all stem from merely meeting and spending time with Patrick Crean. He inspired not only my approach to my profession but to my sensitivity to details of everyday life. I will spend the next two years absorbing everything he taught me in those two weeks. He is a magical human being, as I am sure many of you already know, and I feel privileged to have been able to work with him.

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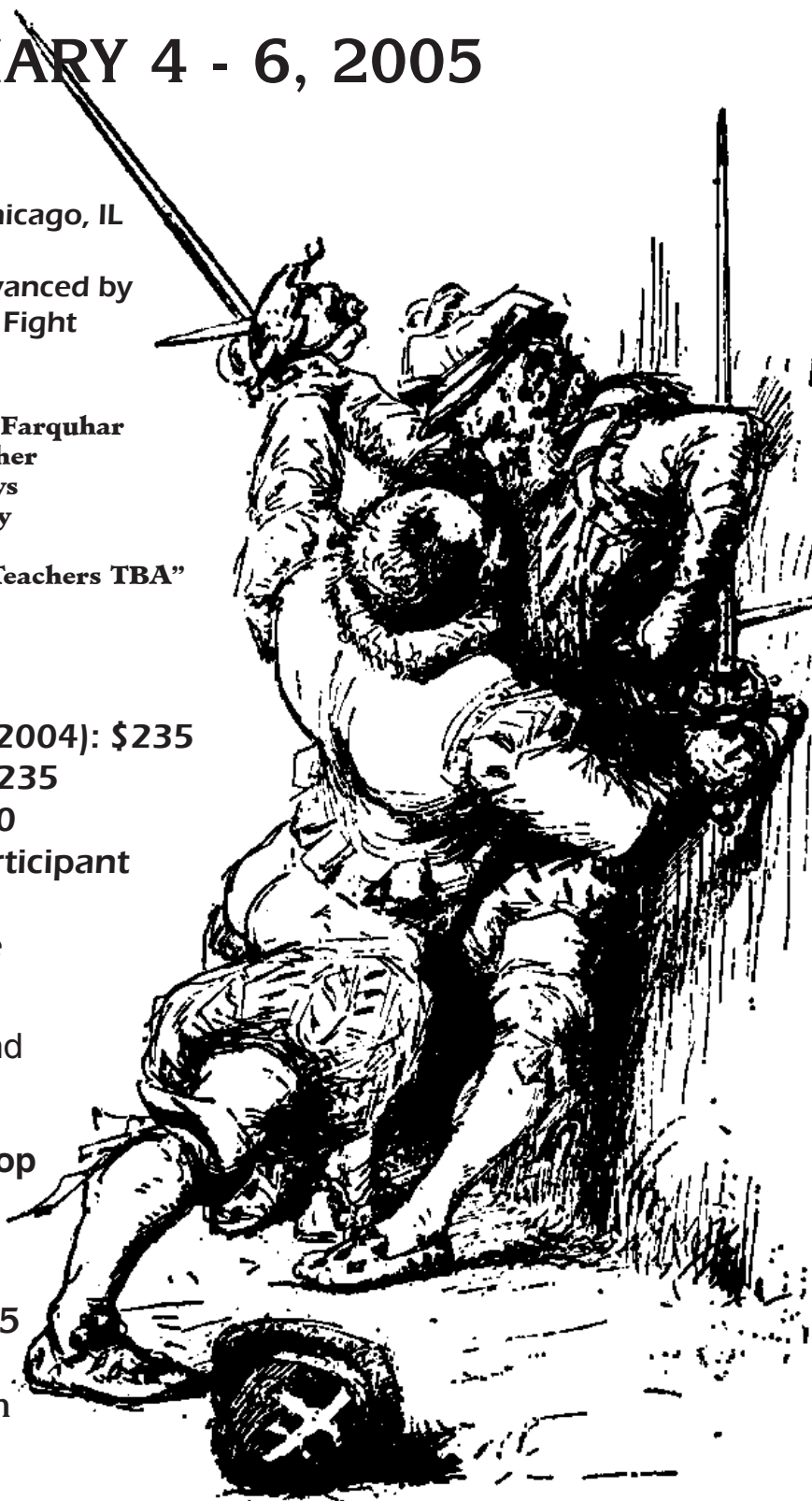
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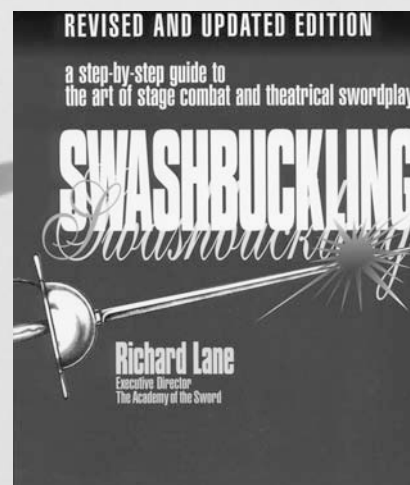
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The Triple Salute *HAMLET, Stratford (Avon), 1975*

by Paddy Crean

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"I was asked by the Director to create a salute of some length that would embody a religious cum chivalrous commencement to the duel scene. So I delved into the past and came across the motto of the Knights Templar Friendship Unto Death. I seemed to have some significance, so I drafted the following, which is very loosely based on the rituals of the Knights Templar, an organization created in 1118 AD. The exhortations are in French—the international language of fencing. The whole I named The Triple Salute."

Osric **Messieur—etes vous pret?** (Gentlemen
—are you ready?)
Hamlet and Laertes nod

Osric **Le Salut a Dieu!** (The Salute to God)
Hamlet and Laertes raise their swords,
place the blades parallel to the ground
across their chests, the middle of the
blades below their chins, the points to their
left.

They grasp their blades by the *forte* with
the left hand, bring their swords to their left
sides, hilts towards the ground, at the same
time kneeling face to the audience.

They raise the hilts, kiss them, raise the
sword high in the air, still holding *forte* with
the left hand, slowly bring swords to their
left sides, bow heads.

Osric **Le Salut au Roi!** (The Salute to the King)
Hamlet and Laertes rise, face the King

They raise their swords, place the blades
parallel to the ground across their chests,
the hilts below their chins, points to the left.

They grasp their hilts with their right hands,
raise their swords high in the air towards
the King, dropping their left hands to their
side.

They bring the hilts to heart level, then kiss
the hilts, raise swords high towards the
King, dropping their left hands to their side.

They bring the hilts to heart level, then kiss
the hilts, raise swords high towards the
King again, bring swords down in sweeping
homage gesture to their right, at the same
time bowing their heads.

Osric

They lift their heads together, describing an
arc with their blades and finishing with their
points touching the ground at their right.

Le Salut d'amitie jusqu'a la Mort! (The
Salute to Friendship unto Death)

Hamlet and Laertes turn and face each
other. They hold their swords with points
down in front of them, sword arm bent, the
back of their swordhands under and touch-
ing their chins

They grasp the *forte* of the blade with left
hands, hold swords straight out in front,
their hilts towards each other.

They walk slowly towards each other, halt.

They place their right hands lightly on the
other's sword hilt.

They retreat slowly backwards in their
places, halt.

They raise their swords parallel to the
ground across their chests, hilts under chin.

They grasp hilts with right hand.

They raise swords high in the air towards
each other, at the same time dropping their
left hands to their sides.

They bring the hilts to heart level, then kiss
the hilts, straighten swords towards each
other.

They bring swords to right side, arms
straight (sword arm, that is), with sword-
points at an angle of forty-five degrees to
the ground.

With his sword point he makes a figure nine
on the ground between Hamlet and Laertes
to commemorate the nine Frenchmen (a
reason, if needed, to have the exhortation
in French!), who founded the Templars.

Osric

Osric

Takes post and says: **En Garde!**
Hamlet and Laertes assume guard.

All this mayhem actually worked, and was as absorbing
although I say it myself, and a point of discussion, for actors
and audience alike. It took a long time and appeared to be
a piece of authentic historical reconstruction. The Director
was very pleased, which always helps.

FIGHT SCRIPT

THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE

(Warner Brothers)

The Fight Master, No. 1, April, 1978

Fight Director Patrick Crean
 Arnaud (small sword) Jacques Berthier
 Jamie (Cup-hilt rapier) Errol Flynn
 Note: Cuts with small sword made only when Arnaud gets wild.

The big ship duel between Flynn and Berthier in The Master of Ballantrae took over two weeks, with all its ramifications to shoot, and in the original film had ninety separate cuts, a record for the times and it may still stand. The original fight script is written in longhand which I have tried as far as possible to reproduce on the typewriter.

(Patrick Crean)

Props: Swords, cannon-practical, cutlasses, pistol, knives, rum barrels with drink, rope, dippers and cups, smoke pots, fire, spy glass. Loot-out in crow's nest.

Arnaud Sword up and down on advance, then engage *sixte*. Advances, disengages *carte* to *sixte*, drops into second advance.

Jamie Retreats, follows engagement *sixte*, and disengagement. Holds *tierce* on Arnaud's drop to second.

Arnaud Advances with beat, feints high right cheek, when full lunge center.

Jamie Takes beat, is deceived in *tierce*, parries *seconde*, thrusts center.

Arnaud Recovers from lunge, parries *sixte*, thrusts *sixte*, returns to *sixte* guard.

Jamie Parries *tierce* short, forward guard in *tierce*.

Arnaud Advances with *seconde*, *tierce*, *seconde* engagement (*Octave* for him).

Jamie *Seconde*, *tierce*, cuts right cheek and right flank.

Arnaud Parries short *sixte* and *octave*, one-two on advance with feint on outside.

Jamie Parries *carte*, riposte with cut at center head.

Arnaud Parries fifth, lunges center.

Jamie Parries wide *seconde*.

Arnaud Points at right arm.

Jamie Parries *tierce*, cuts right flank.

Arnaud Parries *octave*, makes full lunge center. Taling sword back first (piston).

Jamie Parries counter *tierce* with bind.

Arnaud Following through with his lunge makes *corps-a-corps*. Throws off - makes four quick upright changes into another *corps-a-corps*. (Before four Jamie presses him back, moving his right foot forward, and Arnaud takes back his left). Short pause.

Jamie Takes four changes in retreat. Makes full (piston) lunge which takes him past Arnaud.

Arnaud Sidesteps (with left foot advance and right to rear - knees bent) and parries low *seconde* in half turn, then vicious thrust at right cheek.

Jamie Has turned in time to parry short-line *tierce* with bind away.

Arnaud Follows with lunge center.

Jamie Parries *carte* in retreat. Lunges center head cut.

Arnaud Parries fifth, makes one-two-three(after bind away to one) (First feint inside after bind).

Jamie (Backing towards ship's side with cannon on his right) Is deceived twice, parries *carte* in retreat, cuts away to *seconde* as ROPE IS THROWN: - (BULL throws it in Jamie's path).

Arnaud **Let us be fair, Bull.** (A grin) **Besides, there is no need.**

Jamie Off guard, stumbles over rope backwards, until the ship's side stops him.

Arnaud Wound in right shoulder with quick point. Make play with wound hurting. Arnaud is deceived and thinks he has now lost heart, and so from now on becomes less cautious.

Jamie (Stung to fresh effort by the wound) Advances away from wall with cut at right cheek.

Arnaud	Parries high <i>sixte</i> cuts at right flank.	Arnaud	Breaks off. Withdrawing piston but not lunging.
Jamie	Parries <i>seconde</i> advancing and <i>ripostes</i> at cheek.	Jamie	Lunges center
Arnaud	Parries high <i>sixte</i> again and binds away to <i>prime</i> .	Arnaud	Parries <i>carte</i> , binds to <i>seconde</i> , and lunges.
Jamie	On bind, turns and leaps on cannon to right.	Jamie	Yields to <i>seconde</i> parry short, and cuts center head.
Arnaud	Cuts at head as Jamie is leaping.	Arnaud	Parries fifth, makes full lunge center.
Jamie	Arrives on cannon facing Arnaud in time to parry fifth. He stands on cannon and cuts right head, left head, and leaps off to other side still facing Arnaud.	Jamie	Parry <i>seconde</i> low, cuts at right head.
Arnaud	Parries fifth and sixth slices off and lunges center.	Arnaud	Parry short <i>tierce</i> and bind away.
Jamie	Jumps and, as he is in act of jumping, parries <i>seconde</i> almost as he lands. Cut right head.	Jamies	Leaps up companion way.
Arnaud	Parries short, high <i>tierce</i> (1st <i>tierce</i>) and lunges again center across cannon, exposing himself recklessly.	Arnaud	Full lunge center.
Jamie	Parries <i>seconde</i> again, cuts through Arnaud's right shoulder, if there are no epaulets, and in cut across chest from Arnaud's right to left, takes off half his cravat as well. (Short pause?)	Jamie	Faces Arnaud after turn in time to parry <i>seconde</i> pinning sword against right side of companionway. He spins swivel gun to distract Arnaud and slashes at head (swipe right to left). Leaps rest of stairs in turn to quarter-deck.
Arnaud	Ducks, leaps over gun parrying fifth to cut from Jamie	Arnaud	Makes wild slash and goes up after him. Cuts right flank, right cheek, right flank.
Jamie	Cuts at head as Arnaud comes over gun.	Jamie	Parries in retreat, <i>seconde</i> , <i>tierce</i> , <i>seconde</i> , attacks with cuts at right cheek, right flank, left head (points at left head instead of cut!)
Arnaud	Full lunge center.	Arnaud	Binds away to <i>seconde</i> .
Jamie	Parries <i>prime</i> . Slices off in point at right cheek.	Jamie	Yields on bind, and makes drawing central cut inside cutting tunic, sash in two, and button.
Arnaud	Parries <i>tierce</i> , short, goes forward to <i>tierce</i> engagement.	Arnaud	Goes to parry drawing cut in <i>carte</i> but is deceived.
Jamie	<i>Tierce</i> .	Jamie	Deceives <i>carte</i> and makes another slash on tunic on sword arm sleeve.
Arnaud	Feint cut-over, with full lunge in inside line.	Arnaud	You seem to have been studying my style, <i>Monsieur</i>.
Jamie	Deceived in <i>tierce</i> , parries counter- <i>tierce</i> , lunges center. <i>Corps-a-corps</i> high, both on lunge.	Jamie	Only my health, <i>Capitaine</i>. I have my own style, thank you.
Arnaud	Parries counter- <i>carte</i> , binds up into <i>corps-a-corps</i> with lunge center (Jamie lifts) Bull throws cask. Jamie breaks as it comes towards him retreating.	Jamie	Lunges fully center (with advance).
Arnaud	Lunge center.	Arnaud	Was in <i>sixte</i> after slashing. Parries a wild <i>seconde</i> in retreat.
Jamie	Parries <i>tierce</i> .	Jamie	Deceives parry and goes on with another lunge center. (Remise of left foot)
Arnaud	Doubles <i>tierce</i> , making full lunge in <i>tierce</i> line.	Arnaud	In retreat, finds blade on <i>seconde</i> parry-Jamie's point grazing his cheek as he parries. Makes desperate effort in thrusts in <i>tierce</i> and <i>carte</i> advancing, slices over and
Jamie	Parries <i>tierce</i> , after doubles deception. Now has his back to bulkhead.		

cuts at right flank fully.

Jamie Parries with the left hand(with *volte?*). Seizes rope with his right hand and swings out to right over deck to drop over his sword.

Arnaud Makes wild slash at Jamie, as he sails away, missing him (from Jamie's left to right). He then seizes another rope with left hand and does same.

Jamie Has picked up his sword, sees Arnaud coming, and slashes the rope.

Arnaud Falls to deck, loses his sword.

Jamie Flips sword towards Arnaud with his point and says: Pick it up.

Arnaud Catches sword in flip. Picks it up in line. *Tierce* cut at head.

Jamie Parries fifth. Cuts right flank.

Arnaud Parries *seconde*.

Jamie Cuts right cheek and left cheek.

Arnaud Parries fifth and sixth, slices off to cut wildly at right flank.

Jamie Parries *seconde* cuts head high, and comes over point left to make three slashes across tunic—left, right - right, left - left, right. (Arnaud's left and right)

Arnaud Goes to parry third slash, but is deceived (*Seconde* parry).

Jamie Deceived *seconde*, comes over and makes central drawing cut as before, wounding and cutting coat still more.

Slight pause

Arnaud Wild lunge center.

Jamie Parries blocking *seconde*.

Permit me to thank you for your help, *mon Capitaine*.

They have now fought their way to the stern of the ship, high on the poop. Arnaud's back is now to the gunwale.

Arnaud Withdraws for full lunge upper line.

Jamie Ducks and leans to left.
And *Bon Voyage*.

Arnaud's point goes over Jamie's right shoulder and

Jamie runs him through. (Trick sword used here)

Arnaud balances on bulwark for a short freeze, then topples over into the sea, the sword sticking in him.

GLOSSARY

Sixte: *Tierce* with the thumb turned to the right.

Seconde: Actors' parry

Right Cheek/Right Flank: Right and left, here and elsewhere in the script, are almost certainly described from the point of view of the receiver of the stroke, not the giver.

Center Head: A direct downward cut at head.

Octave: Low *sixte* with point downwards, parrying low right side of body with thumb to the right.

Fifth: Head parry

Counter Tierce: Twiddle parry

Bind: Taking the opponent's blade away from its attacking position.

Corps-a-corps: Clinch with bodies of fighters close.

Prime: Watch parry.

Right Head/Left Head: Probably diagonal cuts downwards at head

Parries Fifth: Fifth is the usual head parry. Sixth here probably means the other head parry with the hand to the left of the head. Called *sesta* by some fight directors.

Cut-over: Lifter of the blade over the opponent's to make a thrust attack. Also called *coupé*.

Counter-carte: The other twiddle parry, made from *carte* as opposed to *tierce*.

Right Head: Again, probably a right diagonal cut downwards at head.

Volte: Sometimes called Bum in face.

Deceive: To feint successfully.

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HEADLINERS



STEPHEN HAND (AUSTRALIA) Stephen Hand was born in Tasmania and became interested in historical fencing in 1979 through his involvement in medieval and Renaissance reenactment. He has been involved with modern fencing since 1981, and Kendo since 1985. In 1998 Stephen and two colleagues founded the Stoccata School of Defence, a school of historical fencing in Sydney. Stephen has been invited to many international Western swordsmanship events, teaching principally single sword according to George Silver, early rapier according to Vincentio Saviolo and the sword and buckler system of the earliest extant fencing manuscript, I.33. In 2001 Stephen won the rapier fencing tournament at the annual Western Martial Arts Workshop, against opponents from the best sales around the world. He is the Swordplay Symposium International (SSI) Deputy Director in charge of publications and the editor of the SSI journal, SPADA. Stephen is both an Acknowledged Instructor (in English sword and Elizabethan rapier) with the International Masters at Arms Federation and a Master of Arms candidate. He is the author of over ten books and scholarly papers on various aspects of historical swordsmanship.



RAMÓN MARTÍNEZ (USA) A teacher of classical and historical fencing, Ramón Martínez studied classical fencing in New York for ten years with the late Maître d'Armes Frederick Rohdes - one of the last fencing masters to teach fencing as a martial art. In late 1982, shortly before his death, Maître Rohdes conferred the rank of Fencing Master on Mr. Martínez. In all, Maestro Martínez has devoted more than 28 years to the study and teaching of classical fencing. As many of the most prominent masters of the past centuries left elaborate, highly detailed treatises of the systems and styles which they taught, Maestro Martínez has carefully and thoroughly researching these treatises in an effort to accurately reconstruct these varied styles. These ancient and historical forms are then taught as authentically as possible, with the goal of promoting and preserving this rare martial art. Maestro Martínez is a member of the **Council of Advisors of Swordplay Symposium International**. He is associated with the **Federazione Italiana Scherma Antica e Storica** and the **British Federation for Historical Swordplay**. He is the current president of the **Association for Historical Fencing**, founded to promote, preserve and revive classical and historical fencing. He is also one of the founders of the **International Masters at Arms Federation**.



BRAD WALLER (USA) Brad has been a teacher and fight director with The Shakespeare Theater (Washington DC). He has produced the **International Paddy Crean Workshop** with such cultural institutions as: The Shakespeare Theater, The Smithsonian Institution, The Folger Library, The Shaw Festival, The Stratford Festival (Canada), and the Banff Centre for the Arts. Brad is an internationally recognized scholar in 16th Century fighting systems, and was guest curator of the 1995 exhibit *The Sword and the Pen* at the Folger Shakespeare Library.



TONY WOLF (NEW ZEALAND) is a professional fight director and stage combat teacher with a background of more than 25 years' experience in the martial and performing arts. He has also worked as a professional wrestler, stuntman and stunt coordinator. Between 1988 - 1994 Tony developed his original ReAction system of performance combat, comprising six universal movement and staging principles, and is the President and Founder of the **New Zealand Stage Combat Society**. Tony's fight direction and action design have been featured in more than 180 feature film, television, theatre, opera and ballet productions. Between 1998-2000 he served as the Fighting Styles Designer for Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, and in 2002 he toured Japan with the Washington Opera Company's productions of *Otello* and *Tosca*, performing with Plácido Domingo. He is a regular guest tutor for performing arts courses throughout New Zealand, and also teaches master-classes in Australia, Canada, the USA and Europe. He lives in Wellington, New Zealand with his son, Josh.

FACULTY



PEPPE ÖSTENSSON (SWEDEN) founder, **Nordic Stage Fight Society**. Swedish born Peppe has worked as a teacher, actor and fight choreographer for theatre, television and film throughout Scandinavia. Besides creating and founding the **International Nordic Stage Fight Summer Program** in 1992, he has taught at a number of stage fight workshops in Estonia, Canada and USA, and was made **Honorary Fight Master by Fight Directors Canada** in 2001. His credits include choreographing for The National Theatre in Norway and Malmaballetten in Sweden.



SCOTT WITT Associate Artistic Director (AUSTRALIA) Scott is the President of the **Society of Australian Fight Directors**, Honorary Member of the **British Academy of Dramatic Combat** and an Honorary Fight Director of **Fight Directors, Canada**. Scott has worked in stage, television and film since 1984, acting and fight directing for Queensland Theatre Company, La Boite Theatre, Zen Zen Zo, State Theatre South Australia, Bell Shakespeare, Queensland Performing Arts Trust, Opera Queensland, ABC TV and many independent and short films. Festival performances that Scott has directed have toured Queensland, Northern Territory, South Australia, Hong Kong, and he has served as Associate Director for the Queensland Theatre Company. A recipient of two Arts Queensland Grants for the further development of Stage Combat and Fight Direction, Scott is completing his Masters in Fine Art at Queensland University of Technology in Stage Combat and Fight Direction.



ROBERT SEALE, Executive Director (CANADA) Founder and former President of **Fight Directors, Canada**, Robert has more than 300 professional fight direction credits on stage and screen. A graduate of the National Theatre School in Montreal, Robert holds an Master's Degree *summa cum laude* in Performance, and since 1980 has taught at the graduate and undergraduate levels on the faculties of numerous post-secondary institutions. He has been a professional since 1974, appearing in over 150 leading roles in the major theatres across Canada, and in the U.S. Besides private teaching, Robert does professional consultation, choreography and stunt work for stage and film through his company, **Fights Unlimited**, for such groups as the National Ballet, Shaw Festival, National Arts Centre, Canadian Opera Company, the World Theatre Congress, and both the Toronto and Atlantic Film Festivals. He is a member of the **Atlantic Advisory Council** for Actor's Equity (CAEA), and currently resides in Charlottetown, PEI, with his partner Lisa and their third offspring, Ronan.



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May 2001

May 1	Cornish College of the Arts
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Erin Foret	UA
Rik Deskin	UA
Beau Brower	R&D UA BS
Jake Notchelfer	R&D UA BS
Sasha Zeilig	R&D UA
Alexandra Sollek	R&D UA
Katy Huseintruit	R&D UA BS
Darcy Rubel	R&D UA BS
Tom Arthur	R&D UA
Amy Ferguson	R&D UA

May 2002

May 1	Cornish College of the Arts
Robert MacDougall	David Boushey
Malte Frid-Nielson	R&D UA BS
Justin Beard	R&D UA BS
Nicole Boote	R&D UA
Taralyn Thompson	R&D UA
Bethoven Oden	R&D UA BS
Sean Marrone	R&D UA BS
Ky Dobson	R&D UA BS
Jake Hart	R&D UA BS
Ben Dunn	R&D UA BS

May 2003

May 1	Cornish College of the Arts
Robert MacDougall	David Boushey
Willie LaVasseur	R&D UA BS
Jillian Rose	R&D UA BS
Jeanette Maus	UA BS
Maya Lawson	UA BS
Colin Byrne	R&D UA BS
Merlin Whitehawk	R&D UA BS
Blythe Freeman	R&D UA QS
Erin Stewart	R&D UA QS
Anna Henare	R&D UA BS
Kirsten Hopkins	R&D UA BS

May 14	Southern Methodist University
William Lengfelder	Drew Fracher
Shaun Anthony	UA
Chris Rutherford	UA
Mikail Evans	UA
Chris Wisdom	UA
Weston Davis	UA
Christine Hall	UA
Michael Yeshion	UA
Schuyler Mastain	R&D SiS
Betsy Roth	R&D SiS
Michael Turner	SiS
Bradley Smith	R&D SiS
Jennifer Bronstein	R&D SiS
Catherine Hayden	UA
Bridget Daugherty	UA

August 2003

August 15	Colorado Shakespeare Festival
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Geoffrey Kent
Windell Middlebrooks
Kip Pierson
Eric Pasto-Crosby
Michelle Paopao
Frank Mihelich
Kat Michels

August 28

Chuck Coyl
Gregory Larson
Bill Benton

September 2003

September 14
Chuck Coyl
Catherine Moore
Pam Hurley

October 2003

October 5
Joseph Travers
E. Calvin Ahn
Adam Juran
Daniela Rapp
Andrew Smereck
Savannah Stevens
Craig Swogger
William Wong Jr.
Elke Van Dyke

October 24

Gregory Ramsey
Jason Klein
Phillip Leipf Jr.
David Mason
Kristen Herbert
Stephan Kolbert
Rocelle Warriner
Steven Anderson
Lindsay Caron
Neil Address
Alina Hevia
Sara Sincell
Adam Danoff
Seiji Yamashita
Mark Schwentker
Brady Kearns
Kirstin Elrod
David Catanese
Amanda Wagner

October 27

Angela Bonacasa
Jason Cichocki

October 29

Gregory Hoffman
Martin Noyes
Christina Traister

November 2003

November 8
Angela Bonacasa
Kyle Jones
Anthony Nelson
Andrea Merrill
Tom Carr
Brian Letraunik
David Kelch
Noah Wasserman

Dale Girard

Jason Cichocki	SiS
Laura Penn	SiS
Andrew Scott	SiS (EAE)

November 9

Geoffrey Alm	Seattle, WA
Evan Whitfield	SiS (EAE) BS&S (EAE)
Robert Borwick	SiS (EAE) BS&S (EAE)
Kristina Sutherland	SiS BS&S
John Lynch	SiS BS&S
Molly Boettcher	SiS BS&S
Heidi Wolf	SiS (EAE) BS&S (EAE)
Rebecca Brinson	SiS BS&S
Sarah Cabatit-Morrison	SiS BS&S
Brynna Jourden	SiS BS&S
Carol Roscoe	SiS BS&S

Chicago, IL

Dale Girard
BS
BS

Memphis, TN

Drew Fracher
KN
KN

Swordplay Stage Combat

J. Allen Suddeth
SiS UA
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SiS UA
SiS UA
UA

Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire

David Boushey
SiS
SiS
R&D SiS SS (EAE) UA
SS (EAE)
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R&D SiS UA
SiS
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R&D SiS SS UA
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R&D SiS UA
R&D SiS UA
R&D SiS UA

Chicago, IL

Chuck Coyl
UA

San Francisco, CA

David Boushey
SiS SS BS QS BS&S KN
SiS SS BS QS BS&S KN

Actor's Gymnasium

Richard Raether
SiS
SiS
SiS
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SiS

November 10 University of Southern Mississippi

Scott Mann	Chuck Coyl
Timothy Bell	SiS BS&S
Daniel Dauphin	SiS BS&S

November 25

J. David Brimmer	New York University
Corey Robert Brandeis Pierno	Chuck Coyl
Ryan Bartruff	UA
Stefanie Turk	UA
Dana Schechtman	UA
Brad Raimondo	BS
Derya Derman	UA BS
Elizabeth Wagner	UA
Cassie Newman	BS
Adam Souza	UA
Brad King	BS
Drew Leary	BS
Camron Robertson	BS
Pearce Larson	UA
Kate Johnson	UA
Joseph Jordan	BS
Melissa Meli	BS
Noel Carmichael	UA
Sean Perman	BS
Lelia Shearer	BS

December 2003

December 7	Florida State University
Paul Steger	Brian Byrnes
Holly Butler	UA
David Mayernik	UA
Rebecca Meitin	UA
Cameron Diskin	UA
Melissa Marano	UA
Corie Kanter	UA
Syra Gunning	UA
Jennifer Slechta	UA
John Moreno	UA
Edelyn Parker	UA
Tamara Stender	UA
Ricardo Terrell	UA

December 9 Virginia Commonwealth University

Aaron Anderson	David Leong
Francesca Delutis	UA
Dione Updike	UA
Stacy Jogett	UA
Moquisia Brown	UA
Tori Ulrich	UA
Charlotte Dearborn	UA
Letitia James	UA
Meghan Grady	UA
Eric Driggers	UA
Meryl Rabin	UA

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2 - 13 August 2004

Islington Arts and Media Centre, Turle Road, London N4 3LS

The Basic Workshop covers Rapier & Dagger and Unarmed Combat.

The Intermediate/Advanced Workshop covers Smallsword and Quarterstaff and also for the first week only we will be running a non-certification module in Mass Battle.

The cost of the workshop is: £300 (£270 concessions - students, Equity Members, Members of stage combat organisations) and this includes all test fees.

Students will have the opportunity to take the BASSC Fight Performance Test. There will be up to 7 hours of instruction daily by teachers certified by the BASSC or SAFD. All weapons are provided. Limited places available.

For information or to make an early booking please contact the BASSC

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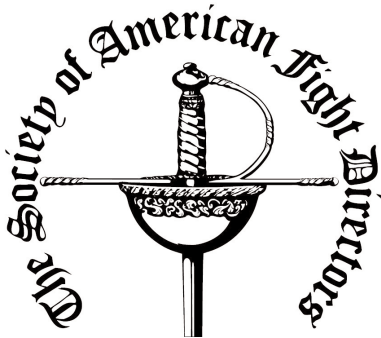
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The Fight Master

is a publication of

The Society of American Fight Directors



The Society of American Fight Directors is a not for profit organization dedicated to promoting safety and fostering excellence in the art of directing stage combat/theatrical violence. The SAFD is committed to providing the highest level of service to the field through initiating and maintaining guidelines for standards of quality, providing education and training, promoting scholarly research and encouraging communication and collaboration throughout the entertainment industry.

The SAFD recognizes members at a variety of levels, including Fight Master, Fight Director, Certified Teacher, Advanced Actor/Combatant, Actor/Combatant and Friend. SAFD members have staged or acted in countless numbers of fight scenes for live theatre, film and television.

Through its training programs across the United States, the SAFD has schooled thousands of individuals in the necessary skills to perform or choreograph safe and effective stage combat.

Friend

One need not be a stage fighter, teacher or choreographer to join and be active in the SAFD. Any individual who has an interest in the stage combative arts who wants to keep abreast of the field and receive all the benefits of memberships may join as a friend.

Actor/Combatant

Any individual who has passed an SAFD Skills Proficiency Test and is current in Unarmed, Rapier & Dagger (or Single Sword) and another discipline. The SAFD considers Actor/ Combatants to be proficient in performing staged combat safely and effectively.

Advanced Actor/Combatant

Any individual who is current in six of eight SAFD disciplines, has had three years transpire since their first SPT test and has been a dues paying member in good standing for two years. The SAFD acknowledges Advanced Actor/Combatants as highly skilled performers of staged fighting.

Certified Teacher

Any individual who has successfully completed the SAFD Teacher Training Workshop. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to teach staged combat and may teach the SAFD Skills Proficiency Test.

Fight Director

Any individual who has held the status of Certified Teacher of the SAFD for a minimum of three years and has demonstrated through work in the professional arena a high level of expertise as a teacher and choreographer of staged combat. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to direct and/or choreograph incidents of physical violence.

Fight Master

Individuals who are senior members of the SAFD who have through service to the organization and the art form been granted this honorary title. These individuals serve in an advisory capacity as the College of Fight Masters, as master teachers at the National Stage Combat Workshops and as adjudicators of the Skills Proficiency Tests.

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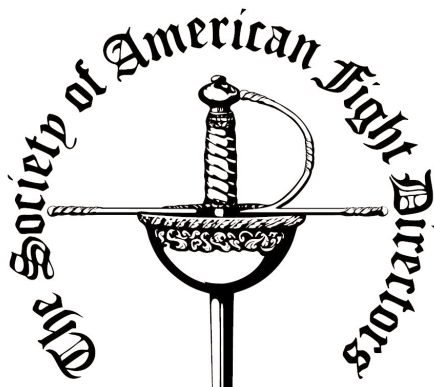
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For stage combat assistance, workshop information, and general questions.

Call 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

Society of American Fight Directors

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF STAGE COMBAT



The Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD) is a non-profit organization devoted to training, and improving the quality of stage combat. We are committed to the highest standards of safety in the theatrical, film and television industries. The SAFD offers educational opportunities across the country at universities, privately and at the annual National Stage Combat Workshop expressly to disseminate this information. In addition, the SAFD tests individuals in three categories:

Actor/Combatant ♦ Teacher ♦ Fight Director

However, one need not take any sort of test to become a member of the SAFD. Anyone interested in the art of fight choreography and stage fighting can join. SAFD members receive a 10% discount on SAFD workshops; *The Fight Master*, a journal published twice yearly; and *The Cutting Edge*, a newsletter published six times yearly with news updates on SAFD activities, policies and members.

To apply for membership in the SAFD, fill out the form below and send to:

The Society of American Fight Directors
1350 East Flamingo Road, #25
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Dues are \$35 annually. (For members outside the U.S., annual dues are \$40)
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Please make checks payable to Society of American Fight Directors

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(Please Print)

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Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

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Instructor: _____

Weapons: _____

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